

The ARMENIAN REVIEW

SUMMER 1948

Armenia Under Soviet Rule

By

H. Gerounian

Isro of Petar

By

Rouben

also

Reuben Darbinian

Vartouhie Calantar Nalbandian

Simon Vratzian

Arpaxat Setrakian

and others;

and

Translations

of Oshakan, Toumanian, Raffi,

and Hamasdegh.

Biographies of Cardinal Aghajanian,
and Avetis Aharonian

Poetry, Defense of Van, and articles of lasting interest.



Volume One, Number Three

THE ARMENIAN REVIEW

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*The* **ARMENIAN** **REVIEW**

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SUMMER, 1948

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Special ornamental Motifs from  
Jacques de Morgan's "History of the  
Armenian People."

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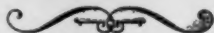
## ARMENIA UNDER SOVIET RULE

By H. GEROUNIAN

(Translated from the Armenian original by  
James G. Mandalian)



The gruesome tale of Soviet communization of the land which during the twenties purged millions of peasants by replacing the landowning Kulak by the so-called system of Kholkozes is a familiar story. Soviet Armenia was no exception to the rule. The following vivid description of what happened, as told by an eye witness, is but one of thousands like it. Gerounian, which is a pen name, was a member of the so-called "Students Brigade"—a sort of communist youth vanguard which was organized in those days—and personally witnessed the events which he describes. During the war he escaped from Russia and took refuge abroad as did thousands of others who now constitute the bulk of European displaced persons.



It was evening—one of those evenings pregnant with terror. Hidden under a white blanket, the goddess of Shirak was sleeping. The bleak north wind was whistling from the direction of Djadjour Mountains, and the ice cut to the marrow. The beautiful range of Mount Arakatz, like the caravan of Abu Mahari, as if deafened by the surrounding pitiful and heart-rending cries, was fleeing toward the desert, trying to be rid of the multitude of men.

The village of N. in Soviet Armenia with its Xenophonian conglomerate of huts

snuggled on the rocky mountain slope. On the two sides of the narrow, winding streets, little hillocks of accumulated rubbish squatted ponderously, while broken snow piles, in places, completely blocked the passages in the streets. Inside the huts, huge fortresses of animal dung dominated the yards, with bouquet-shaped brooms sticking out from their crests. In the center of the village stood the old church, its windows shattered, and its doors wrecked. The wooden, rickety dome was bent with the weight of the huge, ponderous belfry. In the church yard

lay scattered the torn leaves of breviaries, yellow and unreadable from spattered candle drops. Near the entrance was an old, gilt-edged frame, twisted, and covered with dust. On the remaining canvas which covered half of the frame, was the picture of Lord Jesus, hanging from the cross. The altar was empty, the curtains torn, and the desk and the capes of the choir looted.

It was impossible to pass by the church without feeling a pang in the heart. When godly oldsters and devout women saw all this, their eyes were filled with tears of bitterness. They dreaded coming near the church and kissing its sacred walls. They looked at it with reverence, then, looking around lest some one saw them, swiftly crossed themselves and hurried away, staring long at the heavens and muttering silently.

At the base of the village the lamenting brook flowed on gurglingly,—one of the tributaries of sweet-singing Mantash. You would think they were the tears shed in those days which, now having become mountain high, had filled the river bed and reached the level of the embankment.

On either side of the stream lay sprawled the desolate vegetable gardens of the village, mostly walled and knit together by magnificent poplars which, like funereal mourners, swayed to and fro, as if in lamentation of an irrecoverable loss. The village itself looked like a place which had just been occupied by the enemy, everything in half ruins, shaky, and unstable. In the shadow of the church crouched an obscure hut, with a square little window which was covered with oiled paper in place of glass. That was the office of the village council which served also as the village school. It was here that all closed sessions of the party or the government took place. The dim light of an oil lamp showing through the square windows indicated that a meeting was taking place.

Piercing through the thick darkness, with

shrieking sirens, two covered automobiles were racing through the winding narrow streets to the center of the village. They came to a halt at a distant courtyard. Unknown armed men now stalked the streets of the village. The terrified villagers gathered in courtyards and tensely awaited the coming of something terrible. A feverish fear seized all the villagers, beginning with the humblest abode to the most pretentious mansion. They were sleepless and restless, writhing in agony. Even the little children were filled with terror. They had forgotten their warm beds, the sweet night stories and the songs of their grandmothers and, like the grown-ups, filled with an invisible unrest, they waited they knew not for what.

There was a meeting in the village hall. The communist, and communist youth organizations of the village were about to seal today the fate of many. All were ready, seated in their places, awaiting the arrival of the unknowns who had been sent from the central office. Nothing was of any interest to any of them. There was a strange expression on all their faces. No one dared to look the other in the eye. There was suspicion in all their souls, on their faces, and in their eyes.

The club secretary, Mugutch, who was also the temporary chairman of the village council, kept going out and coming in, never a moment restful. Suddenly, the door of the hut was opened and in filed, one after another, several strangers. The excited attendants rose to their feet; some greeted the new-comers, some offered them seats. Mugutch, who was the first to greet them, tried hard with his military scrutiny, to locate the leader, but in vain. From their external appearance, there was nothing to differentiate them one from the other. They all wore military cloaks, without badges or medals, they wore military caps bearing the shining red star in front.

One of the new-comers took his seat at the end of the lone long table surrounded

by unhewn wooden benches on which sat the huddled attendants. The other new-comers took their places at the rear end, each selecting a corner for himself, as if premeditated, or with a definite design. The flickering oil lamp on the table sent a huge ribbon of smoke rolling upwards. The new-comer who had sat down at the end of the table, silently scrutinized them, one by one, verified each, then, turning to Mugutch, he asked,

"Are all present?"

"Yes," replied Mugutch and, like an actor who had rehearsed well his part, he took charge of the meeting. After the preliminary routine, the floor was given to the comrade who had come from the headquarters.

"Today your village must have a fresh revolution," the new-comer began with a sweeping glance. "Today we shall finally overthrow the last props of the bourgeoisie in your village—Kulakism. With the destruction of Kulakism, your village will enter a new era—the happy era of socialism." He raised his voice as he continued, "an era in which there will no longer be exploitation, poverty, the bourgeoisie and its ex-crescence of Kulakism. You all belong to the workingmen's vanguard. Therefore, it is imperative that you know well the present policy of the communist party and the ingenious tactics of our great leader Stalin."

Upon hearing the name of Stalin all rose to their feet and no one dared sit down until the speaker gave the word, "sit down."

Our students' brigade, many of whose members were non-partisans, sat tremblingly because we had no right to be present in that meeting. The communist organization of the village had taken for granted that, as new-comers from the city, we were all partisans, and had deemed it unnecessary to ask questions, or perhaps had not even dared to probe into our identity.

The new-comer harangued his audience on wholly unknown and abstruse questions, interspersing his speech with frequent quo-

tations from Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. He spoke with animation, stressing each important word or sentence, and at times stopping for effect, scanning the faces of his listeners to see if they were taking it in.

It was midnight when the meeting ended. After the meeting, all the communists and the communist youths broke up into small groups, each having received its private instructions. The emissary from the headquarters checked up on the instructions of each group and charged them, in the name of Stalin, to use every means to expose every conspiracy or underground activity against the "socialist order."

Seeing that we students were gathered around the fireplace, the new-comer turned to Mugutch and asked, "What are these waiting for?"

—"This is the brigade which has come from the city, don't you know?" murmured Mugutch as he beckoned us to come nearer.

"Your brigade seems to be disinterested in this work," the new-comer said to Vardan who, standing beside him, was digging in his pockets for some papers to show him.

"Are you the leader of this brigade?" he asked Vardan in a commanding tone.

"Yes," replied Vardan, as he extended him a paper.

We the members of the brigade silently looked at each other, uncertain of what we were to do.

"And they sent you here with such great hopes?" the new-comer growled after reading the paper.

"Why do you speak like that? We haven't been absent from a single meeting," Vardan feebly replied in justification.

"Ach, these meetings, meetings. Meetings are not the important thing. They did not send you here to swell the attendance, but to work. Do you understand? Work. To persuade. And if they refuse to be persuaded, then bring them to their senses by terror." As he pronounced the last word,

his eyes glared and for a moment he looked fiercely into Vardan's eyes.

The word "terror" seemed so strange to us. Vardan recalled the word "influence," which so often had been used by Souren, the organizer of Communist Youth Union.

\* \* \*

I had always had an instinctive dislike for meetings and this was the first time in my life that I sat down at a succession of meetings and patiently listened to the last. Speaking was altogether out of my line because, in my judgment, all these were empty talk, whereas, if I spoke, I would only prolong the meeting by a few minutes and nothing else. How I regretted having joined the "Brigade." But how should I have known it was to be like this, or what could I do when everyone, be he a lecturer or a student, was obliged to join a brigade and leave for the villages? For a moment I recalled the previous meeting, the names of Agho and others. "It means that I too have joined the horde of terrorists," I muttered to myself, "would that I had never seen them."

Meanwhile the new-comer continued his wolf's gospel.

"We are now taking our positions in order to fulfill a sacred task. Don't think this is mere play. No, a thousand times no. This is a fight, a revolution, a war for justice and right. It is quite possible that we shall have clashes with Kulakism. . . . What do you think? Do you think they will meet all this with folded arms? Of course not."

The new-comer became more animated as he kept on, and like a commander who is looking forward to the glorious victory, he repeated his instructions with intense passion.

We came out of the meeting place headed for I know not where. Two of the new-comers headed the company, with Mugutch in the center, while the remaining two, who moved with the caution of men who were going on a robbery, and who suspiciously

scanned every door and courtyard, brought up the rear. Finally we entered a courtyard at the end of the village.

"This is the house of Martiros Nahapetian," spoke Mugutch for the benefit of the new-comers. "He is a former teacher, has many friends abroad and often hears from them. He did not join the village public works. In a word, he is a very doubtful and dangerous man."

"Does he live in the house?" the leader asked.

"No, he is in jail. His wife and the little baby left the village two months ago."

"Very well. Lock the doors and place guards. Let them watch the place."

The order was carried out. Mugutch and a few of his comrades sealed the door and left behind two sentries. The ceremony moved along to new positions.

"This one is the house of our village priest. It has been vacant for two years. After the priest was jailed, his wife fell sick and died. His daughters married and left the village."

The ceremony was repeated and we moved along.

"This one is the home of the well-known mausest Bagrat. For years he was a soldier of Antranik. In 1918 he killed countless Turkish workers and confiscated their property."

"Is he at home?"

"Two years ago the communist organization of the village furnished material against him and he was jailed, but before a few months had passed, he was freed and returned to the village. We let him alone after that. Last fall, he and his family moved to the city. At present his wife and son are in jail."

"Scoundrels," muttered the new-comer, gnashing his teeth, "they have joined the rebels. Wait, wait and you'll see."

We stopped in front of a big mansion surrounded by a high, square wall. The night was pitch dark. Not a whisper was

heard in the village. Even the dogs were silent from terror. Only the distant stars blinked their shining eyes. We huddled together in front of the mansion, waiting for what was to happen. Mugutch knocked on the frozen wood with a few blows of his stick and the noise of the sound instantly spread throughout the empty streets and the courtyards of the village. There was no answer. The blows were repeated several times and the echo again spread through the village.

"Is there any one inside?" asked the new-comer.

"Of course there is," Mugutch replied curtly and resumed his vigorous knocking.

"If they don't open, you must break the door down," the new-comer added, as if seized with an unusual fear.

The dull boards of the door were pelted with a fresh volley of rocks.

"Be careful, there may be those hidden inside who may attack us. Past experience has proved . . .," and as if in precaution, the new-comer drew his pistol. "You too," he said to his comrades in Russian, showing his weapon.

Instantly weapons shone in all hands, their barrels aimed at the door. The pelt of stones continued incessantly.

"Who is it?" It was a woman's voice, broken, and trembling with terror.

"Open it, quick, are you deaf? We've been waiting here a whole hour," Mugutch shouted at her.

The door was opened. A shriveled, stooping old woman, scarcely able to stand on her feet, seeing such a crowd at such an unearthly hour of the night, was petrified in her tracks.

"Dog of a crone, why didn't you open the door?" thundered the new-comer as he pointed the barrel of his gun at her breast.

We all trembled with reverence, wondering what would happen.

"Aman! I pray you, for God's sake, what do you want?" stuttered the old woman, and

retreating a few steps, fell on the ground.

"She's had a heartstroke. Ha, ha, ha," the new-comer chortled with malicious glee.

We all rushed in, driven by an uncontrollable curiosity. Through the dark passageway could be seen a dim light. In a few minutes we were all inside. The little room was illuminated by the dim light of an oil lamp. The walls of the room were smutty, the frame of the square window covered with rags. There was no furniture of any kind. In the center of the room was a patriarchal "Tonir" (the family fire stool), beside which, sprawled on a filthy bed, lay a suffering young woman. Her face was pale, her eyes circled with blue rings.

"Why are you lying there?" the new-comer asked, sneeringly.

"What can I do . . . this year the taxes were so high that, even after we had sold everything, we could not pay a part of it," sobbed the young woman with a deep sigh.

"Where is your husband?"

"I don't know," replied the woman, and her eyes were filled with tears.

"How come you don't know? Perhaps he is hidden somewhere."

"No, no, my life a sacrifice unto you," interrupted the old woman, "they have taken him away, he is caught, he is working for the government."

"Where have you hidden your wealth, hag, tell the truth."

"When they caught my son, they took away his wealth in payment of his taxes."

"Have you nothing hidden now?"

"This is all we have, ourselves and these four walls. The house is before you, search it, if you don't believe."

"Whatever we find in the house will be seized."

"May it be God's offering to you. Take away whatever you can find."

"Your house, too, is seized, your house," thundered the new-comer, boring into the eyes of the old woman. Then, turning to the young woman, he continued, "be good

enough to get out of the house, quick, quick, don't delay."

The announcement burst like a bomb-shell not only on the head of the old woman and her daughter-in-law, but upon us all. The old woman began to beat upon her knees with her dried, bony hands, and raising her eyes to the heavens she murmured some things. The young woman was dumb-founded. She paled, tears swelled in her eyes, and unable longer to control herself, she burst into tears, then seizing her little baby, she hugged it and started to sob out loud. Her piteous sobbings would have moved a stoney heart. As to us, like men who had committed an unexpected crime, we regretted our deed a thousand times. We surrounded her bed, all of us, with heads bent low, not knowing what to do.

The young woman's tearful eyes, now raised, were searching for some one. She was looking for Mugutch, her father's farm hand, and her one-time lover. Finally, locating him, she turned toward him, and embracing his feet, she began to wail loudly:

"Mugutch chan, Mugutch, why are you torturing me so? What crime have I committed? Kill me, kill me right here, but please don't throw me out in the street in this cold weather."

Mugutch was silent. So were all.

"Quick, quick, we've no time to lose," barked the new-comer, and he approached the bed.

"Pity me, at least pity this little one. Give me at least two days, at least until my blood is purged," sobbed the young woman, and clung all the more firmly to Mugutch's feet.

"Astghik, don't ask me, I can't do anything for you, my hands are tied," bending low, Mugutch whispered in her ear.

Her last hope cut off, and crushed, Astghik began to sob loudly, her hands which had been clinging to Mugutch's feet now relaxed, and the latter, feeling himself free,

walked away from the bedside.

"Get up, quick, out with you, no need of crocodile tears here," thundered the new-comer, as he seized the bed cover and pushed it aside. The bed cover, which had hitherto concealed every secret of what is sacred, no longer was there. Exposed were blood-drenched clothes, underwear, and fresh blood spots. Astghik sat there, half-naked, hiding her face in her hands from shame, and bitterly crying and importuning. The scene was cruelly heart-rending. Mugutch stood there, with head bent low, and petrified. All were silent, compunction and nausea stamped on their faces.

A sense of decency impelled Vardan to recover the bed cover and throw it over the swaddling and the unfortunate mother.

"What are you doing?" roared the new-comer as he rushed at Vardan, automatic in hand, but seeing it was Vardan, out of respect for him he asked in a low voice, "are you a member of the brigade?"

"Yes," I put in, unable to restrain my patience longer.

"And you, instead of helping, are obstructing the common cause," the new-comer retorted indignantly, gnashing his teeth.

"This is not the cause, this is a crime," burst out Vardan with unusual temerity, "how could any one throw out such a weak creature in her swaddling into the street? What is the crime of this woman, and what is the crime of this newly-born baby?"

"You mean to tell me you are going to help the Kulaks?"

"Of course, comrade chief, this is an unconscionable thing, I too am against your throwing them out," intervened Ashot.

"What? You do not agree? Do you think the directives of the Leader are to be carried out by your agreement? Quick, get out of here."

"Comrade chief, it's a pity, let them stay for a couple of days, then. . . ." interposed Khachik, while the chekist was foaming at

the mouth, walking back and forth. Then coming to a halt at a corner of the room, and pointing his automatic at us, he ordered,

"Out with you all, all, you scoundrels, I'll show you tomorrow."

To avoid unnecessary complications, we filed out. But an unknown force was tugging, crushing our hearts, our souls. Inside were heard Astghik's sobbing and cries, which gradually degenerated into the screeches of a distraught chicken. The newly-born baby, too, had awakened, and now joined his feeble screams to the unfortunate sobbings of his mother. But the chekist kept on with his threatening bluster and his profanity. We could bear it no longer, and we made our way to our station, the village school house.

\* \* \*

We were all silent. A mild, cutting wind made us uncomfortable with its bleak caresses. We trudged along through desolate, dark streets, in a stormy sea of despairing minds. We were depressed, and filled with infinite hatred toward the conscienceless chekist. A heavy weight bore down on our hearts, and a tormenting mind kept beating against the walls of our brains. The crunch of fragile snow under our heels, with its dull swish swish seemed to be protesting against the cruelty of man. We kept on listlessly, trying not to think of the abomination we had seen. Only one thought which like a twin-edged sword had plunged into our hearts, tormented our minds, and that was the helplessness of that poor young woman.

The village was asleep, asleep with the tingling of its pains and sorrows in its heart. In the distance could be heard the gurgle of the stream which, rolling along, sent forth a resounding echo as it reached the distant, awesome valley of Mantash. We were far away from the scene of the crime, too far away for the screams and the cries to reach us.

"And to think his heart could not be

moved at all this," Ashot suddenly broke the silence.

No one made any reply. We kept on walking, wholly immersed in our thoughts.

"It then means we have today removed Kulakism from our village as a class," spoke up Vartan, deeply moved and nervous, as he came to a standstill.

"By ejecting from their warm bed a baby in his swaddling and a woman in the second day of her childbirth, together with her blood-stained clothes, and throwing them out into the snow," Ashot supplied, as if completing the unfinished word.

"And a doddering old woman, doubled up by the weight of years," Khachik added.

"Let's go, this is not the time for talking," I said, and we kept going.

Again silence.

"It is curious to know who that impertinent bastard is," Vardan's hatred was flowing over.

"One of many like him," I rejoined curtly, in order not to prolong the conversation.

"The thing called conscience was wholly absent in that scoundrel," Vardan was furious again.

"Do you know what, Vardan?" broke in Poghos who had been silent until then, "that is his daily work, he is used to it. Now if someone should hand you a sheep to slaughter, would you have pity? Isn't it so?" he asked.

"Yes, that is so."

"Now you go to the slaughter house and there you will see a man for whom it is a pleasure to strike an innocent animal on the head with a pickaxe or a hammer, and fell him down, even if the animal will be tortured. These are the same way. What is the work of the cheka? To whom is it a secret?" whispered Poghos, and again we lapsed into silence. By now, a new mysterious thought was buzzing in our minds . . . the cheka, that dread instrument of terror and death in our country. A name which sent tremors through the spine. A world

in which life and death were in mortal combat each day and the latter always emerged victorious. A world from which the traveler never returned, where man was metamorphosed, was deprived of all human quality, was sterilized, was made a eunuch.

"Say that they are monsters, Eli," a voice spoke up feebly.

"Say whatever you wish, the name fits them, Avo chan."

"Only don't call them men," added Ashot.

"Would that we had never come here and had never seen these pitiful scenes," Vardan sighed.

Presently, we could hear inarticulate noises from the various parts of the village. We were quite close to our station. Some of us hastened in, while Vardan and I silently withdrew in order to take in what was taking place in the village. There was a noise somewhere, followed by silence. Automobiles made an incessant tour of the street. Presently, one of them was coming toward us. I hope they are not coming after us, I thought, but I said nothing in order not to disturb Vardan. The automobile came to a stop. They were knocking at a door. It opened with a loud creak and presently the neighborhood was filled with the noise of screams and cries. The automobile moved on, but the noise of the cries of women and children kept on ringing, until it spread from street to street. Another noise from another direction. It was a medley of chekist profanities and the cries of women and children.

Two armed men passed us by. They were partisans of the village. "What was that noise?" Vardan asked them. They came near, and recognizing us, began to explain it in whispers. That day there had been a meeting of the commune deciding the fate of those who refused to join the Kolkhoz. Now they were jailing the recalcitrants.

"Did you know about it previously?" I asked them.

"How could we know? Who will ask us?"

"They are your villagers, are they not? If it is not today, it is tomorrow. They will have to join the Kolkhoz, whether they want it or not. What else can they do? Can you explain your viewpoint to the new-comers?" one of them answered in a whisper.

"Our viewpoint?" sighed the other, "you've already seen everything. What did Mugutch say that he too . . .," and here he made a network of his fingers, giving us to understand that Mugutch too had been imprisoned.

Another automobile was heard, another door opened and closed with a resounding slam. The darkness of the night was pierced by a woman's terrorized long shriek. The cry rose into a crescendo, followed by an abrupt silence. There was another gurgling sound, as if someone was being strangled, full of awe and terror. The one being strangled apparently had freed himself of his tormentor and was fleeing. There were three shots, and he dropped in his tracks like a felled oak tree.

The two armed communists silently left us and disappeared in the darkness. At the extreme end of the village a new cry arose, taking the form of a supplication and a long, ringing, beseeching scream. A single shot was heard, then silence. Only the whirr of moving automobiles disturbed the stillness of the night. Finally, all the cars, loaded with their cargo of prisoners, headed for the city.

\* \* \*

The village was not asleep. After the departure of the automobiles, every one rushed out into the streets. Men armed with clubs, women in long skirts, with babies in their arms, like spectres stalking in the darkness, hurriedly passed one another. They were hastening to their relatives, or friends, or neighbors, to tell them what had happened to them, to inform them of what they had heard or seen, as if they knew nothing. Thus, the peasants, having forgotten the bitter December cold, were making a tour

of the streets, from house to house, some half-naked, even bare-footed, and some wrapped in blankets or folds of old clothing. In a moment the streets and the courtyards were illuminated with camp fires, surrounded by men and women who merged their voices in the medley. The women were beating on their breasts and their hips as in wailing, and some were cursing with outstretched arms. The men segregated in groups discussing, arguing, explaining, commenting, and offering their predictions. Slowly, the fires became brighter, illuminating the faces of those around them, while we, standing there in the shadow of the wall, shiveringly watched this strange sight in the village.

"Let's go see what they are saying," Vardan broke up the silence, as he took a step forward. I followed him silently. We entered a courtyard directly opposite us. A crowd of twenty men surrounded the fire, and were debating the events of the night heatedly. As we approached, one of the group nudged his neighbor warningly. The signal was telegraphed to the others, and all remained silent. As we came near the fire one of them recognized Vardan and, pressing his hand, whispered something into his ear.

"Why did you stop your conversation?" I asked the old timer next to me. The old timer, instead of answering me, stroked his mustache with his hand, coughed, and stared at me.

"What else can we do but to shut our mouths, comrade chan," put in the young man standing next to me.

"Did the automobiles leave?" Vardan asked.

"Yes," replied an old man who held a club in his hand.

"What were those noises coming from all sides?"

"How should we know, comrade chan?" again replied the young man.

"Don't be afraid of these, these too are of us," Vardan's acquaintance assured them,

whereupon the peasants breathed more freely and resumed their conversation, although in whispers.

They threw new chunks of wood on the fire. New men from the outskirts of the village joined the crowd, bringing with them fresh news.

"Artash's hat was found near Tsitahank, there were pools of blood near it," whispered one of the new-comers, and all again fell into silence.

"What about the body?" asked one of the by-standers.

"There was no corpse. They say they carry away the corpses," the new-comer replied.

"Vay! may your offspring become a corpse, may you go blind in both eyes," it was an old woman who rushed into the courtyard, attracting the attention of all.

"What has happened, auntie?" Vardan's acquaintance inquired.

"What more should happen? They have just killed my nephew and dragged his corpse away."

"It's impossible, who told you?" interjected another young man.

"My poor sister has fainted, all the neighbors have come to comfort her but it's no use," replied the old woman, as she sat beside the fire and began to sob loudly.

"This is no time to cry; tell us exactly what has happened," from Vardan's friend.

"Ach, what shall I tell? They called to take him away. The chekists would not even let him go in and get his clothes. When he resisted them, they seized him and tied his hands. One of the chekists strangled him with his hands, while another drew his revolver and shot him."

"And the body? Where is the body now?"

"They carried it away in their automobile."

It was already four o'clock, but despite the lateness of the hour, the tonirs were burning. Those near the camp fire gradually returned to their homes. The village

fires were burning. The peasant was slaughtering his last head of goat or lamb, the chicken or the dove. He was slaughtering it and burning it in order not to turn it over to the Kolkhoz.

After bidding them good night, we went to our station. I lit a small piece of candle which I carried in my pocket and fixed it on the edge of the table. Vardan took out of his pocket his notebook and started to write.

"What's that noise in the village?" asked Ashot, raising his head.

"That's the revolution," Vardan said, ironically.

"Truly a revolution," I added, "the village is in mourning."

"It can't be that they are ejecting other Koulaks," asked the same voice.

"No, they are now ejecting the families, those who have refused to join the Kolkhoz."

"You don't mean to say they have imprisoned those too?" Ashot asked in amazement and he stood up.

"What did you think?"

"I thought nothing, but I did not think it would be so soon."

"That scoundrel, what an executioner!"

"The unconscionable scoundrel."

"Tell me this, have these scoundrels left the village or not?" asked Ashot.

"They're gone, they're gone, sleep in peace and let me think," Vardan said.

"Truly these are days in which to sleep in peace; what have we come to," murmured Ashot, and he went to bed.

I hugged the thick-bellied stove and sat there, dreaming of unknown worlds. Sleep was gone from my eyes. The horizon was slowly brightening, making the hills distinctly visible.

"Vardan, it is cold, let's go inside," I said.

"I want to go and see the traces of blood."

"Haven't you anything else to do? Are you the one to do that job?"

"It's interesting, you know."

"There's nothing interesting in it, it's blood, Eli. Why bother? Let's go in."

We went in, and sitting beside the fire, fell into thinking. Suddenly, we heard the ominous sound of new automobiles.

"Bah, I thought you said they were gone," Ashot exclaimed.

"They were gone, but they have returned."

The automobiles stopped in front of our door. The door opened and in came our chekist. He ordered us to dress at once.

"Where are we going?" asked Vardan.

"To the city, quick, be quick about it, come out," the chekist again ordered.

In a few moments we were already in the courtyard. The chekist's blood-shot eyes were constantly upon us. He had come to complete what he had been unable to see or verify in the evening darkness. The snow-capped tops of the mountains shot forth fiery shafts. The village was silent. The chekist opened the door of the automobile and we filed in one by one. The door was shut. Our minds were dizzy with dreadful thoughts. All were silent, deep in thought.

"Where are they taking us?" Ashot broke the silence.

"Let them take us wherever they will. Are we going to worry about that too?" replied Vardan, and again silence.

We could see nothing. Only the machine's rocking indicated that we were going. As to where? God knew. Suddenly the car came to a stop. The chekist opened the door and we filed out. The chekist led us to a hall and ordered us to sit and wait until he returned. A Russian soldier, rifle in hand, guarded the door. We were silent, seized with terrible unrest, waiting for the door which was to open before us. A few moments later the chekist returned and

asked for our identification papers. Vardan handed him the paper, and the chekist read our names, one by one, made notes, returned the paper to Ashot, and after ordering Vardan to remain behind, he set us free.

We jumped out of our seats and verily flew outside, but the chekist called us back and asked us to sign a statement saying, "If we should tell any one of what we had seen or heard, we would be personally re-

sponsible before the law." We willingly signed it and walked out. Only Vardan remained behind, somber, and transfixed. We threw a last glance at him, as if in farewell, and took our leave.

"Give my regards to everyone," Vardan said, and he took a deep breath.

"We came out of there with bent heads. We walked silently to our station where we rested, before our trip to Yerevan.





CARDINAL PETROS AGHAJANIAN

# CARDINAL AGHAJANIAN

By ARAM SAHAKIAN

When two years ago the news was flashed that His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, had elevated Petros Aghajanian, the Catholicos and Patriarch of Catholic Armenians, to the exalted rank of Cardinal, the entire Armenian communities of the dispersion suddenly were aroused to the realization that here was an event of momentous import. They not only took justifiable pride, but were verily thrilled that one of their kinsmen had deserved the recognition of the Pope and was being honored by Him with such an enviable distinction. Until then, although he had for several years been the Catholicos and supreme Patriarch of Catholic Armenians, Aghajanian was comparatively unknown to the Armenians except his congregation, and now, his promotion to the Purple suddenly elevated him into world prominence. It is very natural, therefore, that many will be curious to know who is Cardinal Aghajanian?

Catholicos Petros Aghajanian was born on September 18, 1895, in Akhaltzkah, Caucasus, with the baptismal name of Ghazaros (Lazarus). His ancestors were natives of Karin (Erzeroum) who, fleeing the Turkish persecutions, sought refuge in Caucasus in 1829. Lazarus lost his father at an early age and became an orphan. This left the burden of providing for the family on the shoulders of the mother who was a noble, devoted woman. She did everything in her power to give her three children a liberal education.

It so happened that in those days the Apostolic Administrator of Caucasus Armenian Catholics was Sarkis Ter Abrahamian Vardabet. Having casually met the ten-year-old Lazarus, Sarkis Vardabet was fascinated by the latter's unusual intelligence and took him under his patronage. In compliance with Lazarus' mother's wish that

one of her children become a clergyman, he appealed to Rome and succeeded in securing a place for the lad in the seminary of Propagation of Faith. In October of 1906 young Lazarus set out for Rome.

In a very touching parting scene, the mother of the future Catholicos begged her son not to forget the fatherland, and to return after he had finished his education. The eleven-year-old lad never forgot his mother's request, nor his childhood memories, and vowed to remain forever faithful to his fatherland and the parent people. And of a truth, what followed was no less than a miracle. Confined in the atmosphere of a European metropolis, attending a totally alien school where he was surrounded by schoolmates of all nationalities, for years unable to see one Armenian face, nor to utter one Armenian word, in addition to a rigid religious education, his youthful mind being crammed with a host of ancient and modern European languages, and finally, the wealth and the luxury of great and prosperous nations, in contrast with the poverty and the oppression of his own people: . . . any one of these alone would have been enough for young Lazarus to lose himself in the vortex of alien influences.

From the first day of his student life in Rome which lasted exactly twelve years, young Lazarus attracted the attention of his teachers by his intelligence, diligence, and tireless work. He had to be exceptionally good because the Roman Seminary admitted only those students from all parts of the world who were picked for their superior scholarship and aptitude. He was graduated from the Propaganda University at the age of twenty-two having majored in theology canonical law, and philosophy. His ability was so unquestioned that he was ordained a priest while he was still a student.

He had spent his twelve long years of student life, impatiently waiting for the arrival of the moment when he would return to his dream world . . . the fatherland, and when that moment came, he lost no time in expressing his fond wish to return to Armenia where he could serve his people. This longing had long since been noticed by his superiors and, consequently, in 1919 he was sent to the Caucasus as Curate of the Armenian Catholic St. Illuminator Church of Tiflis. He was scarcely installed in this office when, seeing his unusual administrative talent, his superiors appointed him Pastor of Tiflis Catholics.

His first task in this new capacity was to strengthen the newly-founded Alishanian School, named after the great Mekhitarist scholar and poet Alishan, where he both taught and was a student. Here, within a short time, he mastered the Russian and Georgian languages, and began his comprehensive study of the history and the literature of the Caucasian peoples. This was the period of Armenia's regeneration when a part of Armenia had been liberated from her centuries-old Turkish oppression, and with the creation of the Independent Republic, all Armenian eyes were centered on the prospective redemption of the Turkish Armenian provinces. And it was natural that this revival left an indelible impression on the young pastor, further deepening in him his love for the fatherland. Father Aghajanian was now determined to stay with his own people and to serve the fatherland with all his learning, energy, and zeal.

Then came the ominous autumn day of 1920 when dark clouds were gathering on the horizon, threatening the independence of the young republic, and like all patriotic-spirited Armenians, Father Aghajanian, too, went through the spiritual ordeal. It was perhaps this worry which induced him to accept Rome's invitation to assume the chair of Cosmology and the Seven Holy Sacraments at his Alma Mater, as well as

the directorship of the Levonian Theological Seminary of Rome. This was quite a position for a twenty-six-year-old youth; however, his former professors assured the authorities as to his qualifications and ability. He soon justified this confidence and became one of the most beloved professors in the University. Thousands of students were fascinated by his lectures which he delivered with equal facility in Latin, English, Italian, and French languages.

For fully sixteen years, Father Aghajanian served in this capacity, while his influence and fame slowly rose. It was during this period that he published his three works: "The Life of Father Komitas Keomourjian," in Italian; "The Seven Holy Sacraments," and "The Holy Eucharist," both in Latin. The latter two works are used as text books for students. Besides these, he gave many extra-curricular lectures, and during the last years of his professorship, he served as advisory member of the Congregation for Eastern Rites and the Committee for Codification of the Canon Law of Eastern Churches.

And yet, all these were not enough for the young clergyman's peace of mind. He felt a perpetual urge to leave the new shores, and return to the fatherland where he could serve his people. He had boundless energy and zeal, and wanted wider horizons and broader fields for his active spirit. Finally, in 1935, his wish was fulfilled when, after being ordained bishop, he was sent to Lebanon as Apostolic Visitor to the Convent of Zummar.\*

When in 1936 Catholicos Arpiarian died in advanced age, Bishop Aghajanian was elected his successor. And while this sudden promotion was no surprise to those who knew him closely, being generally unknown to the rank and file, his election was attributed by many to Rome's intervention or pressure. The prevalent opinion was that, after having spent 30 years in the Papal capital, a Vardabet (religious doctor)

who from his very childhood had been brought up and educated in such an environment, would naturally have lost a considerable amount of his Armenian spirit. But, in a very short time, all could see that Aghajanian Catholicos not only was a highly educated clergyman, but no less patriotic an Armenian.

But, this was not the last stop in the meteoric rise of this remarkable man. Unlike those who mount the ladder of success step by step, Aghajanian made his strides in leaps and bounds. He became a priest when he was a mere youth, became bishop at a very young age, and before he could catch his breath, he found himself a Catholicos. And now he was to become a cardinal, an honor transcended only by the Papal throne. The golden opportunity came in 1946 when Pope Pius XII was to appoint 32 new cardinals to complete his list of 70, a number which has become traditional ever since 1568. Up to this time, the only Armenian cardinal in the history of the Armenian Catholic community was Catholicos Hassounian who had been elevated to the exalted office in 1880. Aghajanian is the second, and as such, he enjoys an authoritative voice in the entire Catholic world.

Bishop Aghajanian's election as Catholicos was not attended by the same solemnities which were accorded him on his appointment to the purple. At the time he was in Rome, to attend the ceremonies of anointing. Instantly the news was flashed to Beirut and the Lebanese government hastened to congratulate him. Foreign Minister Henry Farraoh sent the following congratulatory wire to the newly-elected cardinal:

"His Highness, Cardinal Aghajanian, Patriarch of Armenian Catholics, Rome:—Your elevation to the exalted rank of cardinal is an honor to us. Lebanon is

grateful to His Holiness. We offer you our own sincere joy and the assurance of our deep-felt respect."

Upon his return to Beirut, Cardinal Aghajanian was accorded a stately reception. The government itself prepared the program of the day. All the ministers, the members of the Lebanese Parliament, the military, and the people, without any distinction of nationality or creed, turned out to meet him. The entire city was bedecked with Lebanese flags as if in celebration of a national festival. Those Armenians, who did not know the meaning of the word cardinal, understood that day how useful that title could be for them some day. Aghajanian was the guest of honor, and yet, it was the Armenian name which was on every lip.

\* \* \*

During his ten years of service, Catholicos-Patriarch, Cardinal Aghajanian not only has attended to the needs of his flock, but has been instrumental in extending the prestige of the Armenian name. He is singularly respected in all the Arabic countries of the Middle East. In his visits to Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, he has had interviews with the monarchs and the presidents of these countries, and thanks to his vast erudition, he has left a profound impression on all of them. It was largely through his efforts that diplomatic relations were restored between Lebanon and the Vatican.

What is significant here, is that Cardinal Aghajanian is recognized everywhere as the Patriarch of the Armenians. The notion that the heads of various Armenian denominations cannot represent the Armenian people before the outsiders is no longer true. Viewed in this light, the affirmative or negative impression left by the Catholic clergyman can be just as important as that left by the clergyman of the Armenian Apostolic Church. But when we recall that, as a rule, the Catholic clergyman has a better knowledge of the local and current languages, and is better prepared to carry on

\* The Monastery of Zummar, in the Armenian populated center of Ehrefieh, Beirut, Lebanon, is the official seat of the Armenian Catholic Catholicosate. This footnote to column 2, page 16.



Cardinal Aghajanian, Soon After His Ordination, Introducing Armenian Guests To His Holiness, Pope Pius XII.

inter-relations with the non-Armenians, it becomes perfectly plain how appreciable are the services of patriotic-minded and patriotic-spirited Cardinal Aghajanian.

This was demonstrated during the past few years when Cardinal Aghajanian, more than any other Armenian clergyman, was instrumental in dissipating the anti-Armenian sentiment and prejudices which came to the fore in connection with the recent repatriation movement. Every one knows the pernicious and devastating impression left by the indiscretions and the follies of Armenian Communists, leading the natives of the Arabic countries to believe that the entire Armenian communities living within their borders are but a tool in the hands of the Communists. The repatriation movement organized and directed by the Communists left precisely that impression. Such an impression would have been fraught with perilous consequences for the Armenians unless it was checked in time. The efforts of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation to dissipate this erroneous impression is common knowledge. But the Federation had a powerful ally in the person of Cardinal Aghajanian who lost no time in warning his flock, as well as the entire Armenian people, against the pitfalls of the repatriation, with his pastoral letters and encyclicals. And not satisfied with this much, and to make sure, he had important passages from his pastoral letters translated into the local languages and distributed among the natives, so that both the people and their governments would be amply advised that at least one high-ranking Armenian ecclesiastic had stood up against the Communists and their wanton follies.

For this gallant conduct, very naturally Cardinal Aghajanian was made the target of the Armenian communists calling themselves "Progressives," who branded him "the agent of the Dashnags and the imperialistic government." However, the resolute Cardinal paid no heed to these vituperations,

and continued to warn his flock and to enlighten the natives and their governments with reference to the real mischief-makers. In his last encyclical of December, 1947, thousands of copies of which were distributed among the people, Cardinal Aghajanian wrote:

"The disastrous manner in which the repatriation movement has been handled by certain factions has left the impression that what the sponsors are pursuing is not the reassembly of the Armenian people, but the actual disruption of the peaceful Armenian communities, raising brother against brother, and the abandonment of hundreds of families on the street, without any master and without shelter.

"A number of Armenian-language newspapers have made it a routine to paint Soviet Armenia in golden colors, representing it as a veritable paradise under the Soviet regime, on the eve of its expansion with the annexation of the Turkish Armenian provinces. They have exploited ruthlessly and unconscionably the patriotic sentiments of the trusting people, while deliberately hiding the bitter reality, the misery and suffering, and especially the abrogation of elementary human rights of free conscience, free speech, and free press, which although legally recognized in the Soviet Union, have nevertheless remained a dead letter."

The pastoral letter unmasks the entire repatriation intrigue, proving that its aim is to disrupt and wreck the prosperous Armenian communities in the dispersion. Were this not the case, the letter argues, repatriation would have started from those regions in the Soviet Union where thousands of scattered Armenians are in daily danger of swift assimilation. Finally, reverting to the propaganda value of the repatriation movement, Patriarch Aghajanian addresses himself to the peoples and the governments of the Middle East which shelter the Armenians:

"We deem it our duty to declare that our nation, in its preponderant majority, and especially in the dispersion, is opposed to the communist order, and therefore, is worthy of the restoration of the confidence and the trust of the sheltering peoples which it formerly enjoyed. We call on all our noble, sheltering peoples and their wise leaders to take full cognizance of this our declaration, and we assure them that the Armenians will forever remain grateful and loyal to them, and that they want to keep on living side by side with them, in the common effort of promoting the welfare and the prosperity of their adopted countries.

"We know that what we have said will be unsavory to certain people, but we have deemed it our duty to proclaim the same in the interests of love and truth, and in order to hold high the honor and the name of the Armenian clergy. Let not the future historian write that, at a moment of Armenia's crisis, the entire Armenian clergy . . . and particularly those abroad who breathed freely . . . kept silent at sight of her pain, and lacked the courage to publicly unmask the vile intrigues of the enemies of the Armenian people."

So decisively, and so uncompromisingly, did the Catholicos of the Armenian Catholics come forth, and scorning the persecution and the slander, he boldly exposed the

danger which threatened the Armenian people. And now, after the great disappointment, when thousands of families who sold their possessions in the hope of returning to the fatherland are stranded in the streets and sit on ashes, when countless letters from these very same returnees bewail their error and bless the dead, and when men flee from their own fatherland at the risk of their lives, all are convinced that Cardinal Aghajanian was right when he raised his voice at a time when speaking one's mind was considered a crime, and men, beginning with the clergyman to the lowly publican, vied with one another to appear "patriotic."

All this also goes to prove that Cardinal Aghajanian is not the type of leader who will be carried away by the psychology of the mob, nor deviate from the path of truth for fear of braving the stream, or becoming the object of persecution. And what is fundamental, he ranks the interests of his people above temporary glory or personal triumph.

Catholicos-Cardinal Aghajanian is still comparatively young. At present he is 53, the age when a man is at his intellectual and philosophical prime. His exalted rank, his exceptional responsibilities, and his unusual abilities justify the expectation that the future will bring many more, and far greater services to the Armenian people by this noble son of Armenia.



# NAZAR THE BRAVE

## *A Folk Tale*

By HOVHANESS TOUMANIAN

(Translated from the original Armenian)

Once upon a time there lived a peasant whose name was Nazar. Now this Nazar was a lazy, retiring man, so timid that he would not take a single step alone, even if you threatened to kill him. Clinging all day to the skirts of his wife, he never ventured outside of the house without her company. For that reason all the villagers called him Nazar the Timid.

One night Nazar and his wife decided to take a stroll. As Nazar was stepping down the threshold of the house, he saw it was a beautiful, moonlit night, and the air was full of the sound of the chirping of the crickets.

"Ah, woman, what a night to hold up a caravan!" Nazar exclaimed ecstatically, "I have a mind to go hold up the Shah's caravan from Hindustan, and bring the riches home.

"Shut up, you fool! Look who's talking about holding up a caravan. Go back to your bed and stay there," his wife said scornfully.

"Shameful woman, why don't you let me go hold up the caravan and fill our house with the riches? What kind of a man am I, why do I wear the pants, when you dare speak against me like that?"

When he became obdurate, the wife stepped inside the house and slammed the door shut, saying, "A pox on your cowardly head! Now go ahead and hold up the caravan."

Outside, Nazar was overcome with fear. No matter how much he begged, how much he importuned her, the wife would not open the door, positively would not. So, in desperation, he crouched under the wall and spent the night until daybreak. There, basking in the sunlight, he waited for a long time for his wife to come out and take him in. It was a hot, steaming day, and the air was full of buzzing flies, but he was



*Hovhanness Toumanian*  
The Noted Russian-Armenian  
Poet and Author

so lazy, too lazy to wipe his nose, that the flies came and swarmed all over his face. When they became too exasperating, he raised his hand and slapped his forehead when, lo and behold, what should he see but a veritable slaughter. A million flies fell on the ground dead.

"Vah! My goodness gracious! What's this?" he asked himself, astonished. He wanted to count how many he had killed with one stroke, but after a while he gave it up. It cannot be less than one thousand, he thought.

"Vah! Aha! All along I've been such a brave man and I have not been aware of it until now. When I can slaughter one thousand living souls in one blow, why should I knuckle under this useless woman?" He got up and straightway headed for the village priest.

"Father, bless in the Lord."

"God bless you, my son."

"Father this is amazing, astounding, you've never seen such a thing in all your life." And Nazar told the priest the story of his feat, and withall, he told him of his resolve to leave his wife. He wanted only to have the thing put in black and white, so it would not remain unknown, so all could read it and know about it. So, the priest, as if in joke, wrote the thing on a piece of old rag.

*"Invincible hero, Nazar the Brave,*

*Who slaughtered a thousand*

*In one fell swoop."*

And he handed him the script. Nazar fixed the script onto a long pole, buckled on a broken rusty sword, and mounting a neighbor's donkey, he left the village for parts unknown.

## 2.

He picked up a road and kept going, without knowing where. He kept going and going until he came to a halt, and looking backward, saw that the village was far behind. He was awfully scared, and to

brace himself up, he began to mutter under the nose, to talk to himself, and to shout at the donkey. But the farther he went, the more he became scared, and the more he was scared, the louder he raised his voice, until, presently, he was verily roaring, while the donkey joined in the fun with his loud braying. Terrified by the tumult and the din, the birds of the neighboring trees flew away, the hares scurried from their sheltering bushes, and the frogs left their green meadow and jumped into the water.

Nazar raised his voice still higher, and when he entered the forest, it seemed to him that under every tree, inside every bush, or lurking behind every rock, there was a wild animal, or a bandit, ready to pounce upon him, and terrified, he began to bellow, and what a bellowing that was. As luck would have it, just then, a peasant from a neighboring village was coming along this way, leading his horse by the reins. The minute he heard the fearful yowling, he came to a dead still.

"Vay! Woe is me!" he groaned, "What luck! These can be no other than bandits." He abandoned his horse, and seizing the road which led into the forest, he ran for dear life. Brave Nazar, the lucky dog, came roaringly on, and lo and behold, what should he see but a brand new horse, saddled and shod, waiting for him. So, he left his donkey, and mounting the horse, kept on his way.

## 3.

He ate up the distance which, whether long or short, he alone knew, until he reached a village, himself unknown to the village, and the village unknown to him. He was trying to make up his mind as to where to go when, presently, he heard the sound of a zourna, an oriental wind instrument which accompanies the tom tom, and pulling up his horse, he entered the house

which at the time was holding a wedding feast.

"Greetings unto you all."

"Ay, God's greeting upon you, a thousand welcomes to you, friend."

"Come in, come in, sit down. This is God's palace." And they escorted Nazar, together with his banner, to the head of the table, the seat of honor. May your eyes feast upon God's bounties. What all they placed before him, what food, what delicacies, what wines!

The wedding guests wondered whence their visitor had come. The man sitting on his right nudged his neighbor, who nudged the next man, and so it passed all around the table until it came to the village priest. The priest looked at Nazar's banner and spelled out,

*"Invincible hero, Nazar the Brave,  
Who slaughtered a thousand  
In one fell swoop."*

The priest paled, then turning on his neighbor, he whispered the secret, this one to his neighbor, and so the third, and the fourth, and the fifth, until it reached the end, and all the wedding guests realized what a distinguished hero they had among them.

"It's Nazar the Brave, Ha!" suddenly exclaimed one who was a notorious braggart, "how he has changed, I scarcely recognized him."

Presently, it was disclosed that many knew him, related his exploits, their old acquaintance, and how they had spent many days together.

"How come, a great man like this has no servants?" one of them ventured with surprise.

"That's his way, he doesn't like going about with servants. I asked him once about it and he said to me, 'What shall I do with servants? The whole world is my servant!'"

"How is it then that he has no sword befitting his rank? How come he carries

this piece of a rusty sword?"

"That's just it, an ordinary brave can slaughter one thousand with a trusty sword. The trick is in slaughtering a thousand with a broken, rusty sword."

And the amazed spectators rose to their feet, and drank to the health of Nazar the Brave. And the smartest of them all delivered a speech in honor of Nazar, saying, "we had long since heard of your exploits, O Nazar the Brave, and had longed to see your face, and today we are fortunate to have you with us in person and drink to your health." Nazar sighed, and dropped his hands, but the spectators instantly grasped the symbolic meaning of his gesture, how much that sigh meant, and how much that dropping of his hands meant, as they exchanged knowing glances. Then the intoxicated guests left the wedding scene to spread the news wherever they went, announcing he was coming, he

*"Nazar the Brave, the invincible hero,  
Who slaughtered a thousand  
with one full swoop."*

They told the story of his amazing feats, described his terrible look, and named their babies after his name, Nazar the Brave.

#### 4.

After the wedding feast, Nazar rode away. Finally, reaching a green field, he dismounted, and let his horse graze on the meadow. He stuck his banner in the ground, and stretching himself in its shade, he went to sleep. It so happened that this pasture was the domain of seven giant brothers, seven bandits, whose stronghold was located on top of the nearby mountain. Having heard that a stranger had dared approach their den, they marvelled how brave, and how courageous this man must be to venture that close, release his horse, and go to sleep so complacently. Each carrying a heavy club weighing one thousand pounds, the Giants now cautiously approached, but, lo and behold, what should they see? A

horse on the loose, and a man sleeping on the ground, with a banner stuck over his head, reading,

*"Invincible hero, Nazar the Brave, L  
Who slaughtered a thousand  
With one fell swoop."*

"Vay! Woe is us!" The Giants bit their fingers and stood there frozen. Could it be that the news spread by the wedding guests had reached this far? Thus, they stood there, petrified, their tongues parched, and waited until Nazar had his fill of sleep and awakened. When he opened his eyes and saw seven dreadful giants, each holding on his shoulder a huge club weighing one thousand pounds, standing over his head, his heart sank in him, and hiding himself behind the pole of his banner, he began to tremble like an autumn leaf. Seeing this, the Giants turned pale as a sheet. "We've aroused his wrath," they said, "should he strike now, he will kill all seven of us in one blow."

So they prostrated themselves on the ground and begged him, "O, Nazar the Brave, invincible hero, who slaughterest a thousand in one fell swoop, we have heard of thy mighty name and have longed to see you. Now we are fortunate that you have come to us. We, your humble servants, are seven brothers. Our castle is over there on top of yonder mountain. We have a beautiful sister who lives with us. We beg you to come to our castle and break bread with us."

At this Nazar took a deep breath, and mounted his horse, while the Giants, holding his banner high, solemnly escorted him to their castle. There they received him with kingly honors, and accompanied him as he made the rounds of the premises, and so much repeated the tale of his exploits, so much praised him, that their beautiful sister fell in love with him.

##### 5.

Just about this time there was a ferocious

tiger on the loose in the land which terrified the inhabitants of the region. Who should kill the ferocious tiger, who shouldn't kill him? Of course Nazar the Brave was the man. Who else would have the courage to face the tiger? So, everyone turned to Nazar; above in heaven there was a God, below on earth Nazar the Brave. There was none other.

The minute Nazar heard the word "tiger," he was so scared that he dashed out of the house, and started to run toward home. But the bystanders thought he was running to meet the tiger so he could kill him. His fiancée, the seven Giants' sister, stopped him. "Where are you rushing headlong without your weapon?" she asked him. They sent for a weapon so he could add one more trophy to his already innumerable exploits. Nazar took the weapon and stepped out. He went into the forest and climbed the top of a tree so neither he could meet the tiger, nor the tiger could meet him. There, on top of the tree, he huddled. Where was the invincible Nazar of olden times? Nazar now had shrivelled to the size of a pea.

But, as luck would have it, just then the tiger came along and parked right under the tree. Nazar, who had not seen the tiger, began to go to pieces, his bile turned to water, his eyes darkened, his hands and legs went limp, and, Trrrmp, down he fell flush on the tiger's back. Startled, the tiger jumped up and verily flew, while Nazar clung on to his back for dear life. Thus, the frightened tiger, carrying the mortified Nazar on his back, ran and ran, and what a running that was. What mountains, what valleys, what gullies and canyons he flew over, without asking questions.

When the people saw Nazar was riding the tiger, they took courage. "Hiiii-Har-aaaaai, come, Ha, come, Nazar the Brave has made a horse of the tiger and is riding him . . . give it to him, Ha, give it to him." They took heart, and rallying from all over, with Haraaaai's and Hurrah's, with shouts

and shrieks, they attacked the animal with their daggers, their swords, with rocks and clubs and sticks, and with everything they could get hold of, and killed him.

When Nazar came to his senses, and his tongue was loosed, "Alas!" he said, "why did you slay him? I had scarcely tamed him. I wanted to ride him so far, so far. Look what you've done."

Instantly the news was flashed to the castle. Men, women, old, young, all the people turned out to welcome Nazar. They improvised ditties about him and fell to singing. They wedded him to the seven giant brothers' beautiful sister, feasted seven nights, and sang their praises to the King and the Queen.

## 6.

Now it so happened that the king of the neighboring country had wanted to marry the Giants' sister himself, and when he heard that the Giants had given her in marriage to Nazar, he declared war on them and sent his armies to attack their castle. The seven Giants went to Nazar, told him the news, and standing before him obeisantly, awaited his orders.

When Nazar heard the word "war," he was so scared that he dashed out of the castle and started to run toward his home village, but everybody thought he wanted to attack the enemy single-handed, and they stopped him.

"Are you mad?" they begged him, "where are you going unarmed and all alone? Have you lost your head, or something?"

They brought him weapons and armour, while his wife begged her brothers not to let Nazar, carried away by his bravery, attack the enemy all alone. The news was spread among the army and the people, and through spies as far as the enemy, that Nazar the Brave had wanted to attack the enemy single-handed and unarmed, and that they had restrained him with difficulty.

They made him mount a huge black charger, while the animated troops shouted, "Long live Nazar the Brave! Death to the enemy!"

The charger felt that the man on his back was an inexperienced horseman, so he took the bit in his teeth and bolted straight for the enemy's camp. The Giants and their warriors thought that Nazar was charging the enemies without waiting for support, and charged after him with shouts and huzzahs. Seeing that he could not control his mount, pretty close to being overthrown, Nazar reached out and clutched the branch of a tree he was galloping past, hoping to swing himself out of the saddle and thus escape; but as luck would have it, it was a dry and rotten tree, and the branch, the size of a huge beam, broke off. There was Nazar, galloping toward the enemy with a huge limb in his hand. The enemy warriors, who had heard of his fame beforehand, and whose hearts were filled with awe, seeing this, lost their courage, and facing about, they ran for dear life. Run man run, and what a running that was, everybody for himself, and the devil take the hindmost.

"Run for your lives! Nazar the Brave is charging us, tearing up the trees by the root as he comes."

And what a slaughter that was! How many, many thousands were slaughtered. Those who remained alive put down their weapons at Nazar's feet and swore allegiance to him. Nazar the Victorious was escorted back to the giants' castle in great triumph. The people built a triumphal arch, and with indescribable animation, with hurrahs and long-lives, with songs and music, with girls and flowers, with delegations and speeches, met him, and offered him such a glorious welcome that Nazar was verily dumbfounded.

Thus, they escorted him in pomp and glory, proclaimed him king, and made him sit on the royal throne.

To this day they say Nazar still lives and reigns. But when they talk about bravery, wisdom, genius, Nazar laughs.

"What bravery, what wisdom, what genius?" he says deprecatingly, "all that is

empty talk. The whole secret is in a man's luck. Have you got luck? Then you've got fun."

The story says Nazar is still having his fun, and is laughing at the world to this day.

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## THE LIMITLESS GIFTS

NUVER KOUMYAN

*"You generously fill the small cup  
that I hold out to you;  
but when it is filled  
to the very brim,  
what shall I do?"*

*"Another cup will be put  
into your hand."*

*"If my power and patience are exhausted  
and I am not able to resist  
any more,  
what will happen to me?"*

*"A new faith and vigor  
will be bestowed upon you."*

*"When I am on the road,  
and before reaching my destination,  
darkness comes and covers my way,  
how shall I go on?"*

*"The dawn will come soon,  
and you will recover your road."*

*"When my life diminishes,  
and my body becomes cold and gray  
like ashes  
what will happen to my soul?"*

*"Tomorrow  
you will awaken again  
in a beautiful body."*

# A MISSION TO MOSCOW

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## MEMOIRS

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### Part II

By REUBEN DARBINIAN

10

#### My Freedom Vouched For

After the attempt on Lenin's life we could expect no improvement in the condition of our imprisoned comrades, Dr. Zavriev and Liparit Nazariantz, nor could we speak about the resumption of our interrupted negotiations. However, ten days later, when Lenin's wounds took a sudden turn for the better and Bolshevik passions sufficiently had subsided, I took advantage of Makintzian's old friendship in trying to "legalize" my "freedom." This he did by personally vouching for me that I would not leave Moscow.

In the middle of September, 1918, led by my premonitions, I came out of my hiding place, determined to find a job, both for my living and in order to help my prisoner comrades. Nor was this difficult. Makintzian and his comrade A. Karinian, who later became Soviet Armenia's Commissar of Justice, offered me a job of translating text books from Armenian to Russian for the use of intermediary schools, and I undertook the translation of Prof. Vipper's textbooks. The pay was good, and being a fast worker, I was able to earn more than the average salary of a government worker.

But, I had scarcely started on my work when the government suddenly threw us out from our living quarters, the pretext being that half of the seven story building, including our apartment, would be turned over to a Soviet institution. Fortunately,

we were able to get two rooms in another apartment in the same building. The situation was so bad that we had no assurance they would leave us alone in our new apartment, particularly because they had started to seize the homes of so-called "Bourgeoisie" to make room for workers' families. They ejected the so-called bourgeois from their homes in to the street, without letting them take along their personal effects, not even their white linen. In those days the plight of those who did not carry a writ of recommendation or a personal certificate was terrible. I knew men who had been obliged to change residences four times in one winter, and each time they had great hardship in finding a new shelter. Finally, they were obliged to bribe the authorities for the sake of a writ of safety, guaranteeing the inviolability of their last residence.

The lack of fuel that winter was another factor in intensifying the housing shortage. Soviet institutions, when short of fuel, instead of ordering wood, often moved to a new residence which still had a sufficient supply of wood. Apparently the Bolsheviks took great delight in taking possession of bourgeois homes, including the furniture and the wood, and throwing the inmates of the house into the street. Once settled in a new home, they would burn the available wood, then the furniture, from chair to piano, then they would look around for a new home, and the minute they found it they would move there to repeat the performance. This kept

on until the arrival of the warm season.

Under the circumstances, I had no other recourse but to obtain a writ of safety. The latter was of course no absolute guarantee that they would leave us alone because I knew of many instances when such writs were not respected by the Bolshevik authorities. Still, holding on to a writ was better than having nothing and, fortunately, I was able to obtain such a writ through the same Makintzian.

### 11.

#### Dr. Zavriev's Life Threatened

When I appealed to Sahak Ter Gabrielian on behalf of my two friends in prison he gave me to understand that all effort in this respect was futile, inasmuch as the Bolsheviks had been clamoring for their execution. The general tension was further heightened in those days by the arrival of reports from Astrakhan that the noted Bolshevik leader, Stepan Shahoumian, and 25 of his active collaborators had been executed ostensibly at the behest of the Dashnags—a report charged with dynamite which, if confirmed, would mean that only a miracle could now save the lives of the two prisoners.

One evening at 11 o'clock a woman called on us to inform us that she had learned Dr. Zavriev would be executed that night. The caller was the wife of a Russian lawyer, a Socialist Revolutionary who was both a neighbor and friend of ours. She was a member of the prison Red Cross and had stumbled on to her information while attending to Red Cross matters in the Bourtirka Prison that evening. The ill famed Chekist executioner Skripnik, a monster like the Armenian Bolshevik chekist Atarbekov, who had paid the prison a chance visit that evening, had issued his order of execution that very night in the presence of Dr. Zavriev, the moment he had learned that the latter was kept as a hostage for Shahoumian. The Russian lady had been informed by a well-known and trusted servant of the

prison who personally had heard Skripnik's order, and had verified the same by Zavriev himself whom she had seen that evening, and who had urged her to notify me at once.

Without losing a moment I hastened to Hotel Metropol to see the poet Vahan Terian who had newly arrived from northern Caucasus. At the time Terian was a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Armenian Division of the Commissariat of Nationalities, in fact actually its director, since chairman Avanesov, who was also general secretary of the Bolshevik Central Committee, had no time to busy himself with Armenian affairs. Terian was my only hope because I could not locate Sahak Ter Gabrielian, whereas Makintzian was an avowed enemy of Zavriev. Being very intimate with Avanesov, Terian was the only man who perhaps could save Zavriev's life, I reasoned. I was fully aware that Terian, too, had no special love for Zavriev and, like Makintzian, regarded him as a "political adventurer." But an inner instinct drove me to him whose friendship I had made as early as 1903 when I had just entered the University of Moscow.

### 12.

#### Vahan Terian

I visited Terian in the summer of 1902 in his native village of Gandza, Akhalkalak, and for two nights was guest of his father who was the village priest. Vahan was absent at the time, but his brother Aram showed me copies of the gelatin-print students' monthly "Dziadzan" (Rainbow) which he edited, including several beautiful poems by Vahan. I liked the poems very much and at once became interested in Vahan and his literary talent. Consequently, when the following fall, after having graduated from the junior college of Yekatorinotar (Province of Kouban), I entered the historico-philological department of Moscow University, one of the first things

I did was to look up Vahan and get acquainted with him.

Although still a student of Lazarian Institute, Vahan already had struck an acquaintance with the noted poet A. Dzatourian and frequently visited him. Fortunately, I too was acquainted with Dzatourian from my days in Yekatorinotar. One day I told Dzatourian of my interest in Terian (his real name Vahan Ter Grigorian), an appointment was made, and I met Terian in the presence of Dzatourian. Thereafter we often met, and although never intimates, we became good friends.

Years later, in the days of the Ottoman Constitution when I was in Constantinople, I received from him the copy of the first volume of his poems, as well as the first number of an almanac entitled "Garoun" (Spring) under his and Makintzian's joint editorship. Having taken a liking for both works, I gave them a generous send-off in my reviews which were published in the newspaper "Azatamart." Avetik Isahakian, the poet, had sent copies of my reviews to Terian who liked them very much.

Later, when I was editor of the Baku monthly "Gordz" (Work), I contacted anew Terian who willingly contributed articles, despite the fact that he already had Bolshevik leanings. Although an avowed Bolshevik, and fully acquainted with my definitely anti-Bolshevik views, he always was respectful and cordial toward me personally. As far as I could see, he was sincere in his convictions, but that conviction stemmed not so much from his unreserved and unflinching faith in Bolshevik ideas, as it did from his boundless hatred of the old, Tsarist regime and its despotic order. He was not a cosmopolitan, as many Bolsheviks of the time were. He was a patriotic, nationalist Armenian. He sincerely believed that, by joining the Bolsheviks, he would be making a contribution to the solution of the Armenian cause. It was he who had assisted Lenin in drafting and promulgating

the latter's well-known decree in regard to Turkish Armenia. It was again he who, during the negotiations of the Brest-Litovsk Conference, prepared and presented the memorandum pertaining to the Armenian Case to the Soviet Delegation. I well recall the telegrams published during the outbreak of the Armeno-Georgian war in the initial stages of the Independent Armenian Republic, attesting to Vahan's complete sympathy towards the Armenian cause and his wish that Armenian troops occupy Tiflis.

## 13.

**The Danger is Forestalled**

When I entered Terian's room in the Metropol Hotel, I saw there Makintzian, accompanied by his lady friend, A. Karinian, and another youth, both Bolsheviks. I told Terian that I came with a very important mission which required privacy. Having withdrawn to a corner of the room, I told him the story in a low voice, and begged him to do his utmost to prevent Zavriev's execution. Without uttering a word, Terian took the receiver off the telephone and contacted Skripnik. The latter, instead of answering Terian's question whether or not the news regarding Zavriev was true, became furious and demanded to know the name of the informer at once. Terian refused to give my name, but when Skripnik threatened him, Terian clamped his hand on the receiver and asked me if he should give my name. I told him that was up to him, that he could do whatever his conscience dictated. Terian peremptorily refused to give my name.

There could no longer be any doubt of the authenticity of my news. Skripnik was furious because the news had leaked out. Thereafter, Terian tried to contact Avanesov but could not locate him. After several trials, he advised me to leave the room at once, to avoid being arrested by the Cheka. He warned me against returning to my room, told me to hide at a friend's, and

call him up two hours later. I went to the apartment of our neighbor Russian lawyer, and two hours later telephoned him. Terian told me that after my departure Avanesov had called him up and told him of Skripnik's resentment at Terian's conduct. Avanesov demanded an explanation, threatening that unless he gave the name of his informer, he would be obliged to order Terian's arrest.

Terian explained that he could not conform with this demand because the bearer of the news was a personal friend of his whom he could not betray, knowing full well that he would be punished severely, were he betrayed.

"Elementary decency would require," Terian told Avanesov, "that I should not betray a friend who trusts me."

"What decency!" exclaimed Avanesov. "Decency or nobility is a bourgeois superstition. In the name of the Bolshevik party, you are duty-bound to betray your closest friends or comrades, even if death threatened their lives. I myself betrayed two very close friends unhesitatingly because the interests of the party demanded it. If you do not do the same, I will deal with you not as a Bolshevik, but as a suspect who by his silence is perhaps hiding a dangerous enemy."

"I can give you the name of my friend if you'll give me your word that no harm will come to him," Terian bargained.

"That I can do, now tell me who he is."

Terian not only gave my name, but the full details of how I had come into possession of the fateful information. When the next day I called on him he said to me:

"The Cheka often executes prisoners without the knowledge of the Central Committee, thus confronting them with an accomplished fact. Dr. Zavriev would have been executed in the same manner if the Central Committee had not accidentally been informed beforehand. Once informed, the Cheka no longer could have placed them before an accomplished fact, especially in

the instance of Zavriev and Nazariantz who are held as hostages by the Central Committee."

#### 14.

#### Prison and The Cheka

I succeeded in establishing regular ties with the prison by an exchange of letters. Two or three times a week I sent Zavriev and Nazariantz packages of food while the latter kept me posted on their condition. Besides, there were the non-Bolshevik ladies of the Prison Red Cross who acted as our intermediaries and carried out certain tasks. And although vigilance was strict, still much could be accomplished through the officers of the prison, many of whom were not immune to bribery, and this, despite the fact that the penalty for receiving bribes was death. Curiously enough, that winter the Bolsheviks changed three times the whole administrative personnel of the Boutirka Prison of Moscow, and executed not an inconsiderable number of its officers.

These officers of the prison served as messengers between me and my two friends. They often sat with me for hours and opened their hearts to me. They all hated the Bolsheviks. They told me terrible stories about the terrors of the prison. Every night chekists came, and carried away truckloads of prisoners, sometimes in hundreds, to be executed. They said they were taking them to the city to set them free. Thus, thousands of prisoners disappeared. With pitiful monthly salaries, scarcely enough for a week's needs, these servants of the prison avidly accepted a trivial sum of 40 to 100 rubles in return for their services, although they constantly realized the risk they were running.

That winter (1918-1919) the excesses of the almighty Cheka reached such proportions, not even excepting numerous local Soviet authorities, that a strong sentiment broke loose among the Bolsheviks themselves against the hated institution. The

adherents of this faction, headed by the former Bolshevik commander-in-chief Krilenko, went so far as to give public expression to their sentiment in the Soviet official organ *Izvestia*. For two to three months, the question of whether or not the institution of the Cheka should be kept was heatedly debated in the Soviet press and in public meetings. The anti-Chekist movement made daily strides and for a while there was a strong probability that they would win. But, eventually, the Cheka emerged victorious, and this is how it happened.

One way or other, the question had to be settled in January of 1919. However, 10 to 15 days before the final decision, in Moscow and other important cities, there was a sudden outbreak of daring robberies and cases of attack and looting. These attacks were directed not only against the pedestrians, but those who traveled in automobiles or horse vehicles. What was most significant of all, government officers were the chief target of these attacks, not even excepting Lenin himself.

The Cheka made short shrift of this movement by wholesale executions, with the result that its prestige was highly raised in the press. Many insisted that, instead of ending the Cheka, on the contrary, all irrelevant criticisms should cease, and the Cheka should be given a broader range, and wider powers, to carry on its work. It was obvious that the victims of the terrors sought anew their salvation in the dread institution which they now regarded as their guardian angel. Thus the Cheka won. Later, it was disclosed that the Cheka itself was the organizer of these public attacks.

Thus, this ill-famed institution which was intended to fight against the "anti-revolution" and "speculation," whose members incidentally had assassinated the German ambassador Count Von Mirbach, became the most powerful institution in Russia. Its position was finally fortified with the sup-

pression of the Socialist Revolutionaries, when the Bolsheviks became sole masters of the government in Moscow. Not only the anti-Bolsheviks, but to a certain extent the Bolsheviks themselves, all dreaded the Cheka which now felt itself as strong as the government, and frequently acted in defiance of its orders. Like the former secret police, Okhranka, which was the terror of the Tsars and his high-ranking officials, so the Cheka became the terror of Bolshevik commissars.

Curiously enough, a considerable number of those serving in the Cheka were officers of the former Okhranka, while the remainder consisted of the riffraff of other nationality groups, and criminal elements whose beastly instincts found a fertile field of exploitation in this dark institution. Although called to combat "speculation" and exploitation of the poor, the Cheka was most lenient on these very same malefactors who purchased their way through bribery, and as to the evil of bribery, the Chekists went the Tsarist officers one better. Called to combat the "anti-revolution", the Cheka itself was the greatest anti-revolutionary because it drove the most law-abiding and peaceful elements into rebellion as a result of its barbarities, venality, intrigues, and diabolical activities.

## 15.

### Life Under Soviet Rule

It must be stated that the Soviet government itself greatly contributed to the anti-revolution and the general unrest by its interminable "decrees" which limited the individual's freedom and gradually reduced the people to the status of serfs. It was apparent that there was slowly coming into existence a system of feudalism in which not only the individual ceased being the master of his labor and life, but was gradually losing his independence of body and soul, his mind and conscience. He who did not feel, think, or move in accordance with

the will and the pleasure of the Bolshevik rulers, his life was in jeopardy. Not a night passed that the shrill siren of a Chekist automobile did not stop in front of our seven story apartment building, to awaken the inmates, to search their rooms, to terrorize the men and women who were being searched, as well as their neighbors, and to arrest and carry away a few of them. We all felt like convicted men. We all knew that, sooner or later, our turn would come, to be carried away and to disappear, as had been done to thousands of others.

When the dark restless night was over, in the morning we congratulated ourselves that no evil had befallen us the preceding night, and that we were still free. When night-fall came, again our souls were troubled, and when we retired for the night, we asked ourselves if it would be our good fortune to rise in the morning.

I often wondered if there were those who felt differently toward the prevailing situation than myself, my acquaintances, and generally those in my immediate neighborhood. I kept looking for such men who were unperturbed, unterrified by the prevailing tension, but in all my searches of one and a half years I did not find one. And indeed, how could I find such men when in all Russia there was no safety of life or property, when everything was so uncertain, so full of jeopardy, so transitory, when lack of confidence was universal?

It was impossible to trust anyone, to believe in anything. Thousands of eyes and ears saw and listened to everything which took place in the so-called "Bolshevik paradise." Even in your private room you were not safe, could not be sure that unseen and unwanted ears were not listening to you. And men reluctantly learned the art of speaking in low tones, walking soundlessly. One tried to come out into the street as little as possible, to be seen as little as possible, lest the Cheka saw him, because all were suspects in the eyes of

the Cheka, and one's very presence was a challenge to Cheka's agents. He who wanted to hang on to his life was obliged to conform to the never-ceasing demands of the Bolshevik government. He was forced to stifle his individual soul, his ideas, his impulses, his tastes, his conscience, to feign, feign, and feign.

All those freedoms for whose sake the Russian peoples, including ourselves, had given countless victims were now declared "bourgeois superstitions" by the Bolshevik rulers. During the Tsarist regime, those who were not engaged in revolutionary activity could at least rest easy and be sure no one would molest them in the enjoyment of those limited freedoms and rights which the law guaranteed him. But now, under the Soviet, under this would-be "progressive" government, it was not enough not to oppose the government in order to be left alone; you had to be with the government and for it. As now, in those days the Bolshevik slogan was, "either with us, or against us." "He who is not with us is against us."

Naturally, under such a regime life was perfect hell, as undoubtedly it now is for all those who have the temerity to differ with the government and the courage of their independent thought. There were even many Bolsheviks, grown fat on bribery and loot, who often complained that they could not live and enjoy their life as they wanted. In moments of intimate conversation they sometimes admitted that the bourgeois order was better suited to enjoy life. Bolshevik intellectuals, in particular chafed under the restrictions which shackled their creative talent.

One day I called on Vahan Terian who, seated, was translating one of Lenin's political booklets. Involuntarily, I observed: "What a pity, Vahan, that you should ruin your magnificent poetic talent on such tripe. Why don't you write poetry? Why do you waste your time and energy on

things which can be done by others. What business of yours is it to translate political writings?"

Vahan looked at me with a sad smile, and sighingly exclaimed:

"To be engaged in poesy, to write poetry is possible only in a bourgeois order. I don't feel like writing now. I have many unpublished manuscripts, but what I have were written before the October (Bolshevik) revolution. Just now I can scarcely do more than such translations. . . ."

## 16.

**The Monopoly of the Press**

When in May of 1918 we arrived in Moscow, non-Bolshevik and even anti-Bolshevik newspapers, Socialist or non-socialist, were still in circulation, but these were subject to frequent cessation and generally enjoyed a precarious existence. It was plain that the Soviet government was looking only for an excuse to stop their publication. Such an opportunity was offered by the rebellion of the leftist Socialist Revolutionaries. After the latter's suppression, both the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks were thrown out of the Soviet and an end was made of all non-Bolshevik publications.

In the days of their toleration, I used to try reading Bolshevik publications, but every time I tried I felt an inward revolution, my conscience was troubled, and my mind revolted against it. It seemed someone was insulting my most sacred and exalted feelings, trying to reverse my entire world of ideas. With infinite disgust and anger I used to cast aside the Bolshevik papers, only to repeat the performance the next day. But when the non-Bolshevik papers were closed up, I was forced to read Bolshevik official organs by sheer will power. I was forced to learn to read not only the newspapers, but Bolshevik books as well. I had to get used to reading not only their shameless shams, but their interminable

street profanities. Among the Bolsheviks, Lenin was regarded as the coolest, the most balanced, and the most restrained person. But even he could not restrain from indulging in street profanities in his articles against his teacher Karl Kautzky. V. Chernov, the leader of the Socialist Revolutionaries, had counted 72 street profanities in these articles.

One day I spoke about this to a friend of mine and, in reply, he handed me a copy of the Bolshevik publication called "Proletcult." I could scarcely believe my eyes, when, on inspection, I met on nearly every page a filthy three-story Russian profanity. Lenin's pupils had gone him one better, by printing even unprintable words. Not less revolting than these profanities were the unbridled lies published by Bolshevik papers. As an example, *Izvestia* and *Pravda* daily published false dispatches concerning disturbances, revolts, and bloody fights. It was not difficult to surmise that these dispatches were largely hatched up in Moscow. Sometimes these lies were so vulgar and so shrieking that even the Bolsheviks could not hold their disapproval. In those days the Bolsheviks of Moscow were not in a position to receive lengthy communications by wire from abroad and even if a fraction of these dispatches were true, it was patent that world revolution was already a reality. Particularly noticeable was the fact that, whenever the Bolsheviks met with reverses on the internal front, the number of foreign revolutions were multiplied, ostensibly in order to reassure the flagging believers.

In times when no government organized propaganda existed in bourgeois countries, the Bolsheviks converted propaganda into one of their most powerful weapons. Having closed up their opponents' mouths, having confiscated all the presses and paper supplies, they made the press their monopoly. Alongside of *Izvestia* and *Pravda*, which comparatively catered to the more literate and cultured class, now sprung up a host

of vulgar language newspapers such as: Bednota, Communar, Krasnoarmeetz, and others, which distorted the news, representing everything in a favorable light.

When in 1919 the historic Peace Conference of Versailles was opened with the participation of President Wilson, the Bolshevik official organs daily published the long-winded dispatches of their "special correspondents" ostensibly coming from the radio station of Lyons, France. All these dispatches were written in a most provocative language against the "bourgeois", "imperialist" governments. It did not matter how absurd it was that France, which in those days was violently anti-Bolshevik, could permit such broadcasts from her stations against herself and her own allies.

One day I said to Terian:

"Tell me, please, Vahan, how come a fanatical Bolshevik can sit at one of the stations of imperialistic France and daily pour out his wanton profanities against the imperialists, France in particular? How could the French government, the most irreconcilable enemy of the Bolsheviks, tolerate such provocation against itself?"

Terian smiled, as he replied:

"Don't our enemies do as much, if not worse? Take, for example, Denikin's army (white Russians) which published a newspaper called "Communist" to be distributed among the Red Army. The exterior, the phraseology is communistic, but the ideas are anti-communist. It is through such underhanded, disreputable means that the 'volunteers' (the whites) force their hooligan literature on others."

"But, does that justify you?"

"All means are permissible in fighting the anti-revolutionaries."

17.

### **The Armenian Revolutionary Federation Threatens**

So far all our efforts to free Zavriev and

Nazariantz had been futile. From the moment of their arrest and imprisonment we had sent messengers to Tiflis, Berlin, Kiev, advising our comrades of the threat of death which hung over them, and urging them to do their utmost for their release. A few weeks later we were informed that Hamo Ohanjanian had made personal appeals in Berlin to Soviet Ambassador Joffe and the German Foreign Ministry. Unfortunately, besides availing nothing, these efforts had only served to offer the Bolsheviks fresh excuses for ridiculing and fulminating against us.

Far more productive of results was, however, the threat of our comrades in Tiflis. Upon receipt of our news, these had decided to send us through a special messenger an official writing addressed to the Bolshevik Central Committee, with a request that we deliver it to the proper persons in any manner we saw fit. With this writing the ARF Central Committee of Tiflis warned the Bolshevik Central Committee that if Dr. Zavriev and Liparit Nazariantz were killed, or died in prison, four distinguished Armenian Bolsheviks, Avanesov, Karakhan, Terian, and P. Makintzian would be held personally responsible and would be punished by death.

Upon the messenger's arrival in Moscow, we at once called a meeting of the comrades to deliberate on just how we would deliver the message to the Bolshevik Central Committee. After a long debate, it was decided that I should deliver the message personally to Makintzian, without, however, handing him over the writing. Makintzian would be obliged to convey the content of the ultimatum to his Central Committee.

The next morning I called at the Armenian Division of the Commissariat of Nationalities which was located in Cheka's building on Lubyanka. I approached Makintzian and told him I wanted to speak with him on a very urgent matter.

"I'll be ready for you in a moment," Makintzian said.

When he was ready, I asked him to step outside with me. We kept talking about innocent things as we turned our steps toward the square of the Great Theater. On the way I read to him the threat of the ARF Central Committee of Tiflis. Makintzian was beside himself and, like a lunatic, he began to roar in the middle of the street. He swore and made fierce threats. No matter how hard I tried, I could not quiet him down. When still some distance away from the Great Theater, he left me, and running toward Hotel Metropol, he shouted at me:

"Scoundrel, villain, is this why we set you free? That you should go about and organize terror against us? We will show you what terror is. We will shoot you like a dog."

Raving mad, and shouting at the top of his voice, he entered without looking back, the Hotel Metropol, which was the headquarters of all Bolshevik leaders in those days. After that, I wandered aimlessly in the streets of Moscow. I hesitated to go home which was no longer a safe place for me. But where to go? My sister's apartment would be as dangerous, because Makintzian already knew of the place. Finally, in desperation, I returned home. It seemed I was filled with a sort of fatalism. Whatever would be would be. In this mood I entered my apartment, ready to meet whatever was in store for me.

# 18.

## An Interview With Avanesov, Executive Secretary of the Russian Communist Party

The threat of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation was not without its definite effects. The Bolsheviks suddenly became more conciliatory. Avanesov, who had been reluctant to see us until the ARF ultimatum, suddenly sent us word that he was ready to meet any representative of ours,

and this was a good sign, because the fate of our imprisoned comrades depended entirely upon his word.

The only actively free Dashnags in Moscow at the time were Hairik and I. Hairik was an extremely good, educated, and zealous comrade who played the role of a real father, as his name "Hairik" indicated. (Hairik means father in Armenian.) His real name was Y. Yeghiazarian, a wealthy man whose possessions had been confiscated by the Bolsheviks, but who still had laid aside enough to come to the aid of needy comrades. He had been educated in Germany; and being of a gentle nature, he was even liked by some Armenian Bolsheviks whom he had helped in the days of their distress.

After talking the matter over, Hairik and I decided it would be better if we did not meet Avanesov, but instead sent Mrs. Yeghiazarian, a lady who lived in our apartment building of Arbat and who was not related to Hairik (Y. Yeghiazarian), posing as the common law wife of Dr. Zavriv. In those days seeing a Bolshevik ruler was involved in considerable red tape. First, there was the matter of a special permit which was not an easy thing to obtain. Then there was the waiting in front of the Kremlin, in line with the long queue. After entering the Kremlin, there was a second period of waiting until the particular party was ready to meet the caller. After entering the office, the caller was subjected to a fresh examination explaining the object of the mission. Mrs. Yeghiazarian had to go through this entire rigmarole.

Avanesov was an Armenian by descent, a native of Old Nakhitchevan. Outwardly he looked like a prosperous business man. He loved to dress well, and tried to display the airs of a nobleman which he had readily assimilated. When he stepped out, he always rode in a sporty carriage, driven by magnificent horses. In the winter he wore a

fur coat. One who saw him would never have thought that he was the representative of a "workers and peasants" government.

Avanesov was cordial in his reception of Mrs. Yeghiazarian, although his first words were about the ARF threat.

"Was it necessary to make threats?" he said. "Is it not generally known that we, and I in particular, have nothing against the Dashnags nor against their imprisoned comrades? The imprisonment of Dr. Zavriev and Liparit Nazariantz was not directed against the Dashnags, but was a simple means of insuring the release of Shahoumian and his 26 comrades who were held by the British. Therefore, the threat is the result of a pure misunderstanding."

"But why blame Dr. Zavriev and Liparit for the arrest of Shahoumian and his comrades? Why should they be held responsible for something the British have done?"

"There's no question of any responsibility in this. We are simply holding them as hostages in the firm conviction that your people have ties with the British and can bring pressure on them to release our comrades. Appeal to your comrades in Tiflis and let them use their influence on the British. The same day our comrades are released, we will release yours."

Avanesov then had expressed willingness to meet the lady's few requests having to do with the betterment of the prison conditions of the two prisoners, such as giving them separate cells, permitting them to receive packages of food, and seeing visitors at least once a week. Notwithstanding all this, we were not quite satisfied with the results of this first visit and decided that Mrs. Yeghiazarian should see Avanesov a second time. We were greatly surprised when we learned the latter again had agreed to see her at once. But this time he was more excited and less cordial, more cold and restrained. He upbraided us that Shahoumian and his 26 comrades had been executed near Kransovodsk (Trans-Caspian region). They had

learned this from a most reliable source, he said, and therefore they entertained no doubt that their comrades had been killed.

Mrs. Yeghiazarian was terrified hearing this and exclaimed, "It means you're going to kill your hostages then? But why punish my innocent husband Dr. Zavriev and poor Liparit Nazariantz for an act of others?"

"No, madam, you're unduly alarmed," Avanesov reassured her. "We will not execute them but will continue to keep them as hostages to be exchanged with other Bolshevik prisoners now held by the British."

19.

### My Sickness

There was an epidemic of sickness in November of 1918 in Moscow as a result of malnutrition, lack of fuel, the cold, and unusual hardship. Scarcely a family was exempt, and the mortality rate was high. The end of November my brother-in-law came down with typhoid and about the same day I was confined in bed. Mine was a case of severe grippe, inflammation of the lungs and of one ear. One evening, after a critical examination, the doctor told my wife my condition was hopeless and that I would not last till morning. Although these words were uttered almost inaudibly in the passageway, I overheard it, as well as my wife's restrained sobbing. Curiously enough, it seemed all this did not pertain to me. My mind was clear except that I felt a boundless pity for my wife. Life seemed to have lost all interest for me and the imminent danger of passing caused me no pain. I followed the course of my sickness more from curiosity rather than fear.

That night was the crisis of my pneumonia. After the words of the doctor, my wife would not leave my bedside for a moment despite my efforts to persuade her to retire and rest. I felt the lack of air and a pressure on my chest. My breathing was superficial and in short gasps, because deep inhalations caused me sharp pains. To keep

up the action of my heart my wife constantly served me coffee. I was half asleep, in a state of delirium. Sometimes I could hear my wife's voice. Toward morning a strong perspiration came over me, then slowly subsided. I was regaining my consciousness.

Presently, our dear Hairik made his appearance, having brought with him a small quantity of butter, eggs and bread. He told us the famous physician Popov would see me at noon. Popov was former physician of the Tsar's family. When at noon Popov entered my room he at once saw that my crisis was past. After taking my temperature and feeling my pulse, when he saw all was well, he said all I needed now was nourishment, good care and warm sunshine.

"Why do you stay here?" the Doctor exclaimed half jokingly. "Go away to your beautiful, sunny Caucasus. There you will have not only plenty of butter, honey and eggs, but wine too, your wonderful wine which will build you up. Your red wine of Kakhet will revive even the dead. The Caucasus air and sun will do wonders for you. Go away, go away, don't stay here a single day."

But how could I tell the doctor that I could not leave Moscow, that I was being watched by the Cheka, and that I had two precious comrades in prison whom I could not desert? How could I tell him I had little hope of coming out of Moscow alive, much less thinking of the wonderful air and sunshine of the Caucasus?

While the inflammation of my lungs was gone, the condition of my right ear remained the same. I could not sleep nights. In the mornings I felt tolerably easy, enough to busy myself with my translations which were the whole source of my living. But in the evenings the blood kept pounding at my ear and my head ached. To relieve the pain, I would pick up a copy of my favorite author Balzac, but before long I would throw aside the book and get into bed. At the Doctor's orders my wife put hot water

bottles to my feet to draw the blood away from the head and thus relieve my pain.

My physician was a very agreeable, modest, gentle Russian intellectual with Tolstoyevsk leanings. He daily called on me, cleansed my ear, and cheered me saying the accumulated puss in my ear would slowly dissipate, thus doing away with the necessity of an operation. But the days passed without a respite in my pain, until, one day, a small swelling started around my ear which slowly grew bigger. My condition was so serious that one day the doctor told us I would need a specialist. He advised us to call Professor Stepanov of Moscow University. When the latter examined my ear, he advised an immediate operation to prevent inflammation of the brain, which had no remedy.

\* \* \*

In those days the Soviet government had closed all the private hospitals, while the city or provincial hospitals had been turned over to the military. Consequently, the physician decided to perform the operation in my room. But in a few hours they realized the necessary chloroform or ether could not even be found in the "nationalized" drug stores, and at least 24 hours were necessary to obtain the remaining needed medical supplies.

At 11 o'clock at night our specialist Stepanov telephoned us that he had found a private hospital which still operated and which had agreed to receive me on his special plea. We had to leave for the hospital at once but we could not obtain a cab. Finally, my wife and I started on foot along the snow-covered streets. It was a cold night. The streets were empty. We trudged along at a slow pace, often stopping for breath. Having been ill in bed for weeks, I was very weak and could scarcely move my legs. I walked mechanically, thinking perhaps this was the last time I would breathe the fresh air and see the starlit sky. My wife could scarcely restrain her tears.

She walked alongside me silent and uneasy. It was obvious that the pending operation terrified her.

Finally we arrived at the hospital. After the usual formalities, they took me to a small but clean private room. A few hours later they carried me on a stretcher to the operating room. As they administered the chloroform, the unpleasant odor at first filled me with nausea, but soon I felt comfortable again. The voices of the doctors and the nurses slowly receded and their bodies assumed outlandish shapes. But my mind was still functioning clearly. It seemed I was fleeing into unknown spaces at a terrific speed and I breathed with an incredible lightness over mountains and valleys. Suddenly an overpowering terror seized me. I felt as if in a minute I would be plunging into the abyss from which there is no escape.—“This is the end, this is the end, my end, the end of all things,”—and I lost all consciousness.

When I regained consciousness I was in my room, lying in my bed. My head was bandaged. I had a terrific nausea, as if from sea sickness, and a dull deep pain pounded behind my ear. My head was heavy as lead. I was alone in my room. I closed my eyes. When I reopened my eyes, through the half-open door of the room I saw the outline of a woman. It was my nurse. When she saw I was awake she was overjoyed, and entering in she exclaimed, “Ah, you’re awake. Very good, very good. Just keep lying comfortable like that, don’t move. It will soon be over.”

“Give me some water, I am terribly thirsty,” I begged her.

“Water? That’s impossible, it’s dangerous just now, You must wait awhile.”

Upon my persistence, she brought some tea, and said, “Only a few drops.” Then came my wife but they would not let her in. She stood at the door a moment, looked sadly at me, then withdrew. My thirst was unbearable, “water, water,” I kept calling.

When at midnight the nurse brought some ice water I drank it with boundless delight to the last drop. I had never in my life drunk water with so much pleasure.

Since no complications followed my operation, the doctor told me I could move home in seven days. But how could I leave the hospital when we had no money to pay either the hospital or the doctors? Hairik had promised to find some money but apparently he had failed. Finally we decided to appeal to the Armenian Division of the Commissariat of Nationalities for whom I had done some translations in the hope of obtaining an advance payment. Vahan Terian, to whom my wife appealed, was very sympathetic and immediately advanced her 3,000 rubles which enabled me to return home. And although I was still very weak, the very next day I resumed my work. Wrapped up in my winter coat, my head in bandages, and wearing my gloves, I took up my translation of Professor Vipper’s text book on ancient history in my cold room.

The doctor came to see me every day and cleansed my wound. Two weeks later, I was strong enough to walk to his place. These trips were exceedingly interesting to me because in the waiting room I met dozens of patients with whom I could converse and find out their feelings in regard to the general situation. I saw that they all hated the Bolshevik regime, and firmly believed that the rule of the “Jews,” as they called it, would not last long.

20.

### My Comrades Are Freed

After a confinement of six months, the Soviet government, or Avanesov, to be precise, finally was pleased to release our two comrades, Dr. Zavriev and Liparit Nazariantz. They had both been saved from the jaws of death, and it went without saying

that our joy was boundless. The hardships of jail life, the perpetual threat of death hanging over, and especially that terrible night when the threat had turned almost into a certainty, had left indelible traces on Dr. Zavriev. When he came out of prison he was a completely changed man. He had lost his former equilibrium, was exceedingly irritable and nervous. There was a perceptible change in his exterior too. His hair was completely gray, and his dress lacked its former meticulousness. He dressed like a Franciscan monk, his waist tied with a rope.

Liparit seemed practically unaffected by his prison life and was in no wise changed. Both had been released on probation. Their release would be final only when the British freed at least two of their Bolshevik hostages and to this end they had wired Tiflis. The doctor insisted on our leaving for abroad, preferably Paris where the Peace Conference in those days was to convene. The Conference undoubtedly would consider the Armenian question and our presence there, in his opinion, could be useful. In this sense he drafted various plans and constantly busied us with their discussion.

But we lacked the necessary means. We figured it would take at least 150,000 rubles to go to Paris. Dr. Zavriev insisted we should at least have two millions if we were to help the Armenian Delegation in Paris. I do not know why he was so convinced the Delegation lacked funds and that we should take along a huge sum from Moscow to help the Armenian cause. He proposed to obtain this sum from the Armenian wealthy residents of Moscow, based on the premise that they were duty-bound to make sacrifices for the Armenian cause.

We did not, of course, obtain a single cent from the Armenian wealthy. The Doctor was exceedingly uneasy and distressed. The thought that the fate of the Armenian people would be sealed in Paris while he stayed helpless in Moscow caused him un-

told suffering. He slept scarcely two to three hours a day. Sometimes he would call on us late in the night, stay with us for an hour or two, then go into the street to continue his wanderings. It seemed an inner voice constantly warned him to leave Moscow at once; there was no other way out.

When Dr. Zavriev was finally convinced that the British would never consent to exchange their prisoners with us, he turned on us with his perpetual proposals of escape. He argued that, if we stayed in Moscow, the Bolsheviks would execute us all in the end and that our sole salvation lay in escaping. On the other hand, escape was no easy thing. First, we had no funds. Secondly, how could I escape when my wife was with me? Thirdly, Liparit was positively opposed to the idea of escaping, which, in his opinion, was exceedingly dangerous. Liparit seemed optimistic of the future.

One day when Zavriev called on us my wife asked him to give me a physical examination, as I had not been feeling quite well lately. The Doctor took me to the adjoining room, closed the door, examined me; and when he saw there was nothing wrong with me, suddenly he began to sob like a child and begged me to take my wife and leave Moscow at once. "I can't stand it any longer," he begged with tearful eyes, "if this keeps up another month I'll go mad. But I can't escape alone, such a thing would have serious consequences for you and Liparit. It's more difficult for you to escape than it is for me or Liparit because you have a wife with you. If you two escape first, it will be easier for me and Liparit."

"But how? I have debts to pay and I have no money for our fare. I hope to be able to pay my debt in two months but I don't see how I can secure my fare. How can we two leave without money?"

"If that's the case," he exclaimed joyfully, "I'll get your fare for you. Only

promise me that you will leave."

I promised him, and from that day I began to make preparations to leave for the Caucasus.

22.

### **The Internal Fights of the Bolsheviks For Position and Office**

During the last few weeks our financial condition was worsened as a result of the attitude of the Armenian Division of the Commissariat of Nationalities. Toward the end of April, 1919, the Armenian Division suddenly refused to pay for my translations. At the Commissariat's recommendation I had translated Karl Kautzky's "The Economic Teachings of Karl Marx" from German into Armenian. When I handed the completed manuscript over to Ashot Hovanissian, an officer of the Commissariat who later became Executive Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia, he figured the exact amount of the pay, issued a bill of payment, and walked over to the Commissar to get his signature. Five minutes later he returned somewhat confused to tell me that the Commissar had refused to sign the paper on various grounds. He gave me to hope that in a couple of days all the difficulties would be settled and I would get my pay.

It was on the eve of Easter. My whole hope lay in that sum. We didn't have any money even for bread. I could not possibly wait, but what to do? I returned home empty-handed. Two days later I again called on the Commissariat. This time Hovanissian was less cordial and very coldly said to me: "Our people refuse to pay you any money because you are an anti-revolutionary, who should be shot. They are exceedingly disturbed over having given you any assignment. On your account, they have punished me, too, by removing me from my office. A committee of three will examine my case. Apply to Comrade Hai-

kouni who just now is replacing Terian; he might be able to show you a way out."

I went to see Haikouni. He was a clean-shaven plump man, with sly small eyes and a composed mien. After listening to me, with a scarcely perceptible sarcastic smile he said, "I've given you no orders; go apply to him who gave you the assignment."

"True, Mr. Haikouni, you have personally given me no assignment, but the Armenian Division of the Commissariat of Nationalities did so. And since you are now the head of that division, you are duty-bound to respect the assignment of your predecessor."

"Ashot Hovanissian has acted on his own responsibility. He had no right to make you an assignment, much the same as he had no right to order the translation of such a great work. We don't need Karl Kautzky's book. What we need is small agitationary pamphlets."

"That is none of my business. If Mr. Hovanissian has acted independently and in your opinion is worthy of punishment, that's none of my affair. I am a plain intellectual worker who was assigned by your Commissariat to do a certain work; I have done it and now I demand my just reward. You have no right to punish me for the errors of your comrades."

"We won't give you any money. Be thankful that your head is still on your shoulders."

At these words I lost my temper and shouted at him: "I demand that you pay me my just reward. You who call yourselves socialists are even worse than the capitalists in your treatment of the workmen. No matter how much they exploit the labor of others, they at least pay something. But you are unconscionable exploiters who wish to seize the worker's entire labor. It seems I will be obliged to appeal to the Commissariat of Labor to defend my rights."

I was surprised that my words, instead of irritating Haikouni, rather made him more respectful of me. He was more polite, and

his voice was mild as he said: "I'm sorry that I can't do any thing more. The thing is beyond my power. There's a committee which shall examine your claim. Whatever it decides, it will be done. Apply to Comrade K. Vardanian, chairman of the committee."

Vardanian was a man of nearly 45, quite virile, who, as a former Hunchakist, did his best to show me he was a loyal Communist; and that made him look ridiculous. He acted like an amateur. He was cordial enough to me. He found my case just and promised to settle it within a week. But he dragged the thing, for one excuse or another, for three weeks, and one day suddenly told me the thing was out of his hands, and that I must apply to A. Karinian who had replaced Ashot Hovanissian as head of the publishing division.

Ashot Hovanissian had told me that it was Karinian who had ferociously attacked Terian, Makintzian, and Hovanissian himself for having patronized me and given me work, whereas, in his opinion I should be shot. The thing seemed strange to me because when a few months before Karinian had come to Moscow from the Caucasus he was very cordial to me and had severely criticized his fanatical comrades. He had told me that he was sick and tired of the perpetual party squabbles and had decided to devote his entire time to cultural pursuits. Moreover, he had advised me to do the same. And when I expressed my willingness to cooperate with him along that line, we had two meetings and even drafted some plans for the books we were to translate and divided the labor.

In desperation, I finally turned to Terian to help me out. He was well acquainted with my case but expressed regrets that he could do nothing for me.

"Unfortunately," he said to me, "I can't help you although I admit the justice of

your case and that they are treating you like scoundrels. Naturally, you have no fault in this. But you must realize that I am a victim of the internal fight now being waged against Pokhos (Makintzian) and Ashot (Hovanissian). Our enemies, headed by Haikouni and Karinian, are trying to seize our positions. That's the reason why they are trying to discredit us. And the best way to discredit us is you. They say that, instead of imprisoning, or executing you, we have protected you, have created a job for you, and have promised to give you ample remuneration. It goes without saying that we have imprisoned men who are far less harmless than you, such as Dr. Zavriev and Liparit Nazariantz. We can no longer protect you because you do not conceal your anti-revolutionary views. If we protect you, we will lose our positions. Because of my illness I have taken a month's leave of absence and my position is now being filled by Haikouni. But I have not yielded them an inch, nor will. Not only you, but I would sacrifice scores like you in order to frustrate the plotting of my enemies. Forgive me for being so cynically frank with you. Understand and forgive."

After this conversation I called on Karinian. "They've just assigned me to the post and I haven't taken it over yet," he said to me. "After I have looked into your case, I'll try to satisfy you. Wait a couple of days and you'll get what's coming to you."

I did not, of course, get my money two days later. When I reminded him of his promise, he got angry with me for disturbing him. Only three weeks later, and that through the pressure of my friends, Karinian was pleased to make a partial payment. Of the 25,000 rubles due me, I received 5,000 which was scarcely enough to pay my debts. I was obliged to seek a new job for my living.

*(To be continued)*

## THE SUN

MANOOG MANOOGIAN

(Translated from the original Armenian by  
James G. Mandalian)

### I

*Ab sun, the sun, the sun . . .  
The sun is in my mind, sun in my soul,  
sun in my heart. Sun in my bones,  
in my sinews, in my eyes.  
Long live the sun. Glory unto the sun.*

### II

*And behold the gardens fair, resplendent  
with the sun . . . They rejoice, they exult,  
leap with joy and blossom forth like the  
white, turbulent bodies of young girls who  
have become new brides, overflowing with  
their lovely, ticklish coquetry.  
And behold the men through whose soft  
velvety insides shoots a tremor, needle  
after needle. And the fields sit in travail,  
with a pagan, worshipful pregnancy.  
Sun on the prairie, sun on the turf, sun on  
the meadow, on the cool spring, on the  
trickling water. Sun on the mountain tops,  
sun inside the roofs of men and God.  
Yet, how much sun, how many suns! How  
can one sun suffice for such wondrous  
creation, you say? Long live the sun.  
All honor unto the sun.*

## III

*And I remember myself now. I am like  
the devil-may-care, unsophisticated and  
fiery boy of olden days.  
Ah, worshipful days. Tortured days. Days  
of exile and massacre.  
Ah, old memories . . . stolen sanctities . . .  
ravished bodies!  
Pity . . . Oh pity . . . Men, friends and enemies, pity!  
Yes, I am just like the boy of olden days.  
The barefoot boy of the village,  
the rebellious lad of the village . . .  
the blessed boy of the village.  
Time . . . Time . . . the city . . . the manners,  
the mores and the atmosphere of the city  
which are day by day destroying all  
beauty . . . Beauty of character . . . Beauty of the soul . . .  
The beauty of magnificent man.  
But today I am only a village boy.  
I refuse all new attributes. I am nothing now.  
Neither a writer, nor teacher, nor a public man.  
Nothing. No one thing,  
I am but a village boy today, who loves,  
to lie down under the sun, to dream and  
to sleep with an unsullied, pure and milk-white heart,  
who relishes not superfluous and shiny frippery,  
simple and good,  
innocent yet a somewhat mischievous boy.  
And now I stand in front of the metropolitan crowd,  
I plant my foot upon the chest of the city folk,  
my forehead high and shining, my chest stuck out,  
proud and manly, my tongue smooth, and  
uncontrollable, to cry out loud my message  
which is heavy as lead and priceless as diamond.  
Behold I say—but before I speak, a kiss  
to the sun, all honor to the sun, the sun of  
the newly-weds' ribbon which wakened  
me today, hurling my whole being into old,  
nostalgic memories.*

## IV

*I was born in a village which had good men,  
 all-sufficing plenty and a loose-haired, shining sun.  
 I was born in a village which had rosy girls,  
 innocent, coy and good, who had moonlike faces,  
 pensive and mysterious . . .  
 with large eyes, black and deep, at times violent,  
 articulate, blue and infinite, always,  
 with boundless smiles.  
 I was born in a village which had comely,  
 small, lovely brides, with irresistible smiles  
 and disturbing flesh . . . and bosoms thick and full  
 like the pages of the gospel . . . their hair strewn down  
 their backs like flowing rivers, wave by wave.  
 I was born in a village where the sun never  
 failed by day, and at nights the moon poured down  
 her blessing, silently and copiously,  
 upon all the rooftops.  
 I was born in a village whose gardens were  
 without number, and whose blessings had  
 no scale nor limit. Whose vineyards were  
 many, with harvest enough to go all  
 around, whose mountains, fields, the  
 valleys and dales, the rivers and the  
 springs were sacred and holy, beloved and worshipful.  
 Oh my little village of olden days, my own  
 hometown . . . Shall I ever see thee again?  
 Oh, pity, pity . . .*

## V

*One day a tornado passed over the  
 mountain tops of our village, a wicked  
 biting and cruel ghost glided over  
 our village. And with an imperceptible  
 swiftness and nameless ferocity, laughingly,  
 whistlingly, mockingly, chuckingly and scornfully  
 it swept away everything, everything.  
 And now my village is no more. All our villages  
 are gone. Of all the martyred sanctities  
 we alone are left, . . . we who still worship the sun,  
 are drunk with the sun . . .*

*the generation which has survived with the sun,  
planted in front of the city crowd,  
standing upon the heart of glittering cities . . .  
proud and fierce, conscious and sun-like.  
Woe unto him who ignores or denies us.  
Woe unto him.*

## VI

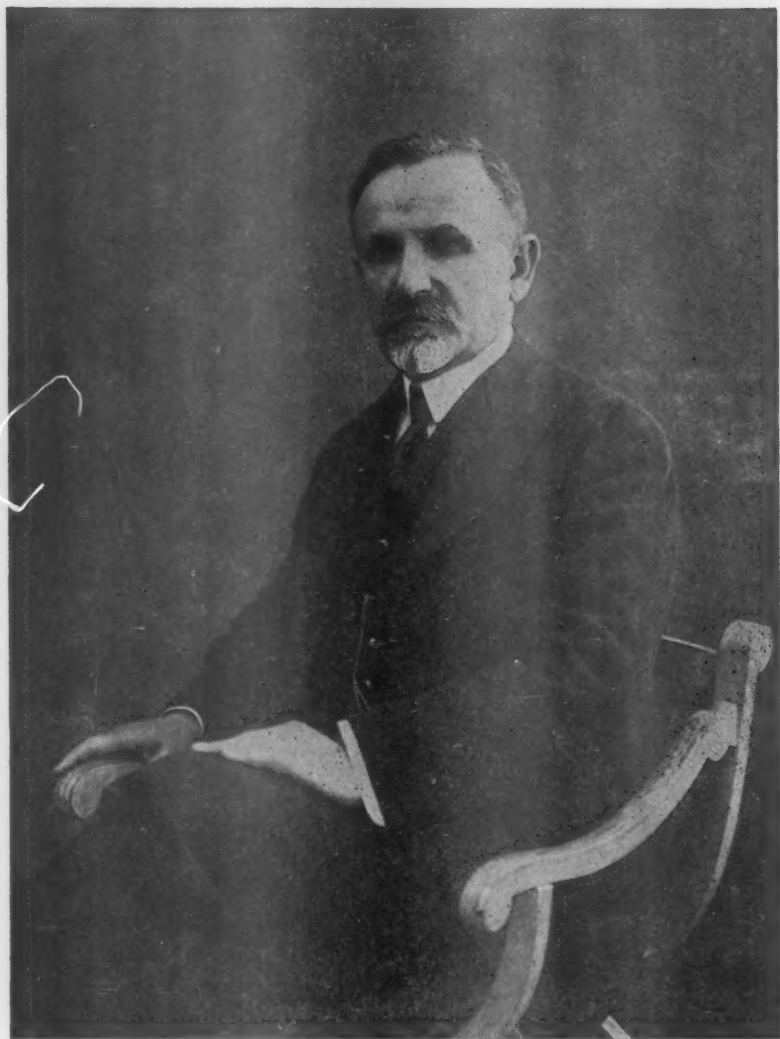
*Bless us and make us grow, oh sun.  
Bless and make us grow, because we  
shall prepare your tomorrow which is also  
our tomorrow. This young generation  
which was born in the villages and grew up  
counting the sands of the desert.  
All of us, with our mind and might, our  
pen and our sweat, our souls and our  
heart-throbs . . . Glorious like you, deceitless and  
always bright like you, oh splendid sun.  
Glory to thee, and all honor to tomorrow  
which shall soon be here.*



## ABOUT MANOOG MANOOGIAN

In the middle of December, 1944, in Athens, three Greek and two Armenian Communists abducted by night four respected patriotic Armenians—Mihran Papazian, his wife Mrs. Arshalouys, their 22 year old son, and the noted poet-teacher Manoog Manoogian. Three weeks later their bodies were discovered in a dark alley, stripped of all clothing and riddled with bullets.

As seen in his prose-poem "The Sun", poet Manoogian was born in a village of Turkish Armenia and was one of those waifs who were swept off by the hurricane which struck the land, making thousands homeless . . . the barbaric Turkish deportations.



THE LATE AVETIS AHARONIAN

# AVETIS AHARONIAN

By V. MASISSION

After fourteen years of suffering, caused by a stroke which silenced his eloquent tongue and prolific pen, Avetis Aharonian, foremost Armenian poet of the Twentieth Century, and universally beloved as the "Troubadour of Armenia's Sufferings," closed his eyes forever on April 20, last in Marseilles, France. With his passing, came to an end a stormy and magnificent life which was closely woven with the Armenian history of the past half a century, and with all, stopped a warm and affectionate heart which had come into the world to immortalize the Armenian suffering, and to trumpet to the world the story of the Armenian struggle for emancipation. His death was universally mourned by all the Armenians in the dispersion, and the same feeling assuredly was shared by the people of Armenia where the name of Avetis Aharonian has been tabooed by the Soviet authorities for the past thirty years.

Avetis Aharonian was born on January 4, 1866, in the Village of Igdir, the Province of Sourmalu in the Ararat Valley, at the base of Mount Ararat. Igdir is contiguous with the town of Igdir which is the center of Sourmalu. His father, Locksmith Arakel, migrated to the Caucasus from the Village of Haftevan in Persian Azerbaijan during the late fifties, and eventually settled in the Village of Igdir. His first wife having died, here in Igdir, Arakel married the widow Zardar, and to this union was born their eldest son Avetis.

Avetis Aharonian's childhood was spent in the native village, in the shadow of the

majestic Ararat, in his father's work shop and vineyard. The smith father, his work shop, the vineyard, and Mount Ararat left their indelible imprint on the soul of the future poet-novelist. He acquired his knowledge of reading and writing from his mother who was one of very few literate women in the village. After his mastery of the rudiments, Avetis was committed to the tutelage of Giulkhaz Calif with whom he undertook, although without understanding it, the reading of the classical Psalms, the Haimavourkh, and Narek. After this preliminary training, he was transferred to the newly-opened village school. The next year, 1876, he was admitted to the village High School which he completed in 1881. That same year he succeeded in entering the Gevorgian Seminary of Etchmiadzin, the equivalent of the western college, and after his graduation in 1886, he returned to his native village.

In 1887, Avetis Aharonian joined in holy wedlock with Anoush, the daughter of neighbor Nazarentz. That same year he commenced his literary activity with a series of articles on provincial life published in "Ardzagang" (Echo) of Tiflis. His first article describing the flooding of River Arax, was published in Ardzagang, April 26, 1887. In the fall of that year he was invited to head the Gevorgian Seminary of Etchmiadzin, and the following year he was offered an instructorship in the village High School of Igdir. He taught there until 1892 when he received a new invitation to New Beyazit. After one year's teaching he was again recalled by his native Igdir, this time to serve

as Principal of the High School. He continued in this office until 1896 when, by an order of the Russian government, all Armenian schools in Caucasus were closed.

During all these years Avetis Aharonian kept up his collaboration with the Tiflis periodicals. Besides Ardzagang, he wrote for the periodical "Taraz," Grigor Ardzrouni's "Mushak," and Y. Lalayan's "Adgagrakan Handes." Ardzagang and Taraz published his serial entitled "Hro Kine" which later, in 1897, was published in book form by the Armenian Publishing Company of Caucasus. This first volume of his was a study of the social and family life of the Armenian peasant woman of the Ararat Valley. During these years, he also translated from the Russian into Armenian the noted Polish writer Eliza Orjesko's two novels, "Melancholy Pastorals" and "Mighty Samson," which likewise were published by the same company.

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After Sultan Hamid's massacres of 1895-96, thousands of Western Armenians crossed the Russo-Turkish border and sought refuge in Caucasus. And since Igdir was close to the border, a part of the refugees settled here. As a member of the newly-organized Relief Committee of Igdir, Avetis Aharonian made daily contacts with the newcomers and became closely acquainted with the story of their tragic experience. These stories became the principal source of his initial literary works. Presently, in 1896-97, the "Mushak" Daily of Tiflis published a series of his stories: "Pout em Kath" (A Drop of Milk), "Falak Voughouni," "Pout em Khatz" (A Piece of Bread), "Bakhdi Khagher" (Tricks of Fate), "Basho," and many others. In a short time Avetis Aharonian became a famous literary name. Presently, a group of wealthy Armenian patrons of Baku offered to send him to Europe to complete his university education. Thus it was that he went to Switzerland, where he entered the department of history

and philosophy of Lausanne University from which he was graduated in 1901. The same year he moved to Paris where he studied at the Sorbonne for one year.

During his student years abroad, Aharonian kept writing for *Mushak Daily* of Tiflis which, among others, published the description of his travels in Italy. During his stay in Switzerland, he became acquainted with Christopher Michaelian, one of the trio who founded the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, and under his influence, he became associated with the ARF official organ, "Droshak" (Banner), published in Geneva, in which, under the pen-name of "Gharib", he published his series of stories entitled "Azadoutyan Tjanaparin" (On the Road to Freedom).

In 1902 Aharonian returned to Caucasus, and settled down in Tiflis where he became literary editor of the "Mourj" Monthly, in which capacity he continued until 1905. It was during this period that he published, partly in "Mourj" and partly in separate volumes, his "Schvetzerakan Giughe" (The Swiss Village), "Merriki Sourpe" (The Saint of the Hurricane), "Kheghtjere" (The Miserables), "Araz," and "Lrouthyouné" (Silence). In the summer of 1905 he made a trip to Europe in the interests of the Armenian Cause, after which, in 1906, he returned to the Caucasus.

At the beginning of 1906, in Tiflis, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation started the publication of a daily newspaper "Haratch" (Forward), which in the course of time was followed by "Alik" (Wave), "Zang" (The Bells), "Yerkir" (Fatherland), "Khariskh" (Anchor), "Vtak" (The Brook), and others. Avetis Aharonian was a member of the editorial staffs of all these papers, and aside from his signed articles, most of the editorials were written by him. In August of the same year, he was elected a delegate and took part in the Caucasus Armenian National Congress which was called by Khrimian Hairik, the Catholicos of

Armenians residing in Etchmiadzin, Yerevan.

In the fall of 1907 Aharonian was invited to take over the principalship of the Nersisian Seminary of Tiflis. Thus, temporarily setting aside his public speaking, once again he assumed the role of educator which he had begun years before in his native province. He continued in this capacity until May of 1909.

Early in 1908, when the Russian government instituted the famous trial suit against the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, hundreds of Armenian intellectuals, public leaders, and revolutionary warriors were arrested and thrown in the dungeons of Tiflis, Yerevan, Baku, Gandzak, and other Russian cities. In May of 1909, Aharonian, too, was arrested as a revolutionary, and was confined in Metekh Prison of Tiflis; but the same summer, together with a number of his fellow-prisoners, he was transferred to the prison in Baku, where he fell seriously ill as a result of lung complications. Through influential intercession, the judicial authorities were prevailed upon, however, to permit his transfer to Baku City Hospital. It was during this period of confinement that he wrote his "Andound" (The Abyss), "Khavari Metch" (In the Darkness), and "Mokhirneri Takitz" (Underneath the Ashes).

Having partly recuperated, in 1910, Aharonian was transferred to the prison of Novocherkassk, and finally, in February of 1911, he was released on bail, pending his trial. Distrustful of Russian justice, the same summer Aharonian secretly crossed into Turkey from the Caucasus, and from there to Europe, eventually landing in Lausanne, Switzerland, where he resumed his literary activity. He described his travels through Turkish Armenia in a work entitled "Yerazneris Ashkharhe" (The World of My Dreams), which was published in the Daily Azatamart of Constantinople.

When during World War I, the Russian government granted amnesty to Armenian

political prisoners, with permission to return to the homeland, in 1916 Aharonian returned to Caucasus where now he devoted his entire time to political activity. That year, his wife, Anoush Nazarian Aharonian, passed away, and the next year Aharonian married the widow Mrs. Nevart Djamharian.

Then came the great Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, as a result of which the Russian armies retired from the positions which they had occupied in Turkish Armenia. The entire Armenian people were organizing feverishly to withstand the impending Turkish menace. In September-October, 1917, in Tiflis, there took place the Armenian National Congress of Caucasus. As one of the presidents of the Congress, Aharonian actively participated in this gathering, and was elected President of the administrative and executive body, "The Armenian National Council of Caucasus," created by the Congress. The small Armenian army organized through the efforts of the Council, was driven under the pressure of superior Turkish forces as far as the banks of the rivers Arax and Akhourian. But finally, in May of 1918, by a supreme stand, in the battles of Sardarabad, Karakilis, and Bash Abaran, the tiny Armenian army stemmed the Turkish tide, and drove their armies back.

As a result of this signal victory, alongside the other Caucasus nationalities, the Armenians, too, declared their independence. On June 4, in Batoum, a treaty of peace was signed between Turkey and Armenia. Two weeks later, the Republic of Armenia sent a delegation to Constantinople to negotiate several points of the Treaty of Batoum. Avetis Aharonian was the chairman of this delegation. The negotiations dragged on until October, when defeated Turkey laid down her arms, and the Armenian Delegation returned to Yerevan.

The defeat of the Central Allies was followed by the Paris Peace Conference. In January of 1919, the government of the Ar-

menian Republic appointed a new delegation to present the Armenian demands to the Paris Conference. As President of this delegation, Aharonian arrived in Paris in February and immediately set to work to press the Armenian Case. In June of the same year, he was elected to the first Parliament of the Armenian Republic. Aharonian was elected a member of the Parliament in absentia, and later its president.

On August 10, 1920, as the plenipotentiary representative of the Armenian Republic, Aharonian signed the Treaty of Sevres whereby defeated Turkey recognized the Independent Republic of Armenia, the definition of whose boundaries was left to the arbitration of the President of the United States. Scarcely one month after the signing of the Sevres Treaty, Turkey attacked the Armenian Republic and seized the regions of Kars, Ardahan, and Sourmalu. Meanwhile, advancing from the north, the Russian Red army occupied the remaining parts of Armenia, and instituted in Yerevan a Soviet government. The Soviet government of Yerevan refused to recognize the Armenian Delegation in Paris, while Soviet Russia made common cause with Kemalist Turkey against the execution of the Sevres Treaty.

Despite these adverse circumstances, the Armenian Delegation which still continued to be recognized as the only official Armenian representative body, kept up its labors on behalf of Armenia's rights at the Paris Conference. After the signing in 1923 of the Treaty of Lausanne which put the knife to all Armenian hopes, the Armenian Delegation lost its official character, and Aharonian once again returned to his literary activity.

His time having totally been taken up with political activity from 1916 to the signature of the Lausanne Treaty, Aharonian naturally had nothing to show in the field of literature. After 1923, however, there was a constant flow of publications of his numerous artistic works and his literary,

historical, and political studies. Beginning with 1923 until the fatal day of his paralytic stroke, the Hairenik Monthly continued to publish his works: "Aragilnereh" (The Storks), "Ou Phokhrik Aghtchike kerkchoum er" (And the Little Girl Was Chuckling), "Kapouyt Yeraze" (The Blue Dream), "Yeghtcherapoghe" (The Horn), "Tzitzer-naki Bouyne" (The Nest of the Swallow), "Heskoumi Gishere" (The Night of Watching), "Voskephayl Bzez," and "Banc." Besides these short stories, Hairenik also published a number of historical, literary, and political studies from his pen, such as, "Andranik," "Raffi," "Mer Orere" (Our Days), "Patmoutian Daserits" (Lessons from History), "Kemalist Turkey," "Ariakan Louyse Hayotz Ashkharhoum" (The Arian Light in Armenia), "Avarayi Vogegotchoume" (The Invocation of Avarayr), and others. Besides these, during the same period, Aharonian produced several volumes: "Christopher Michaelian," "Djamborte" (The Traveler), "Karot Haireni" (Yearning for the Fatherland), and "My Book" in two volumes. Meanwhile, Aharonian was an active contributor to the Armenian press of the dispersion, particularly Hairenik Daily of Boston, and Housaper Daily of Cairo, Egypt.

In 1930 the Armenians of the dispersion celebrated the fortieth anniversary Jubilee of Avetis Aharonian's literary and political activity. These celebrations were touched off by a magnificent public gathering in one of the halls of Sarbonne University, and in a short time they were extended to all the Armenian-populated centers of France and abroad.

Two years before the Jubilee celebration, in the spring of 1928, Aharonian had a slight stroke of paralysis. And although the stroke left no permanent effects, his physician advised him to avoid thenceforth any sustained tiresome work or emotional excitement. Aharonian was not, however, the man who could do without active work. He continued his literary and public activity with

the vigor and the zeal of his youth. In February of 1934, the Marseilles Branch of Hamazgayin Mioutyoune, trustees of the Beirut Armenian Seminary, organized a public affair in the interests of that institution and invited Aharonian to be the principal speaker. Despite his physical condition and the advice of his intimate friends, Aharonian accepted the invitation and went to Marseilles. The planned affair took place in Braban Marseilles, one of the largest auditoriums in the city, in the presence of thousands of spectators. After the preliminaries of songs, recitations, and music, Aharonian ascended the rostrum, and began one of his most inspired speeches dedicated to Armenian culture and the fatherland. His speech, however, was not destined to be completed. He pronounced the words "Armenian people," and suddenly staggered. A stroke of the brain felled him and he collapsed into the hands of by-standers.

After the administration of first aid, he came to, but he was no longer the former Aharonian. He was a broken man now, half paralyzed, and mentally incapacitated. His right arm and right leg were paralyzed, but what was worst of all, he almost completely lost his speech. After that, he could only pronounce piecemeal words, brief sentences consisting of two or three words at the most.

Until 1945, although half paralytic, Ahar-

onian was able to move around, in the house or the adjoining garden, with the aid of a cane, ire the support of his friends. A third stroke in 1945 brought him, however, permanently down in his bed. And although his left arm and leg were still active, he no longer could walk. From the day of his first stroke until his death, he lived in Beaumont, a suburb of Marseilles, where he was the object of not only his friends' and immediate loved ones', but of the entire Armenian community's affectionate care.

Only a heart like Aharonian's could for fully fourteen years have fought so stubbornly against such a grim ailment. But even that heart could not forever carry such a burden. So he succumbed. He breathed his last at 2:30 A.M., April 20, 1948. Amid universal mourning, his remains were moved to Paris, and deposited in the Cemetery of Pere Lachez.

Avetis Aharonian's entire life was boundless devotion to his people and to his native land. Curiously enough, in these evil days, even a handful of this native earth is denied to a man who dedicated his entire life to that soil. The ashes of Avetis Aharonian shall never get rest on alien, although hospitable soil. We do not know when, but surely the day will come when they shall find their final resting place at the base of Mount Ararat.

That day cannot fail to come.



# THE WOMAN WHO FELL FROM HEAVEN

By OSHAKAN

(Translated from the original Armenian)

On summer days the evenings are balmy on the mountains. The green of the trees on the heights gently turns to yellow, from the tips of the blushing sky, thin, burning cloudlets drip fire, the empty space between the opposing hills becomes filled with something like incense. On these desolate spots, the ewes and the goats with their black and white coats assemble from various points into the Yailah—the wide open prairies. It is one of the most beautiful wings of the mountain chain. Above it, the Great Mountain recedes, like a skulking giant, awesome, and inaccessible. Below it, the green of the midway hills becomes rounded. The village shepherds park their flocks in the Yailah during the summer season.

\* \* \*

"It's time to stir the fire, boys."

The voice was Ayan's, who was always the latest to arrive. He was wont to gently thump the rocks with the heavy staff in his hand in order to make the goats which dragged behind fall in line.

"Where in heck have you been? We're tired from waiting so long." This comment came from Alo and Kolo, who had already parked their flocks for the night, within the fold of nature's shrubbery.

It is getting dark. In the west, the fire has settled down and now the sea is covered with the flame. In the evenings, the weather suddenly becomes warmer in the Yailah after the winds subside. In the quiet, lukewarm, scented atmosphere, the shepherds

love to relax, cast aside their staffs, and carefully folding their knapsacks, now arrow-shaped from constant lying on them, to put them under their heads.

"Ahh, let's stretch our bodies and relax," and saying this, they stretch themselves on the green grass.

Shaking their tails and snuffing the ground, the dogs retire to the heights to resume their growling.



OSHAKAN

writer and foremost Armenian literary critic of the Twentieth Century. He died on February 18, 1948.

Scarcely five minutes later, a voice calls, "Hey you, Alo, get up and stir the fire."

Alo is the younger of the shepherds, consequently he has learned all the chores which generally are the job of young ones. Reluctantly he gets up, rubs his eyes, and approaches the fire where a thick log smolders day and night. He blows hard at the log. The ashes spread their white wings and fly away. The red fire comes to light. Resting on one knee, he gathers the charred fragments and piles them on the fire. After a few strong puffs, the flame casts its bright red rays on his merry face.

\* \* \*

"Haideh, ya boy, the fire is going."

A little later old Ayan gets up pantingly, and unconsciously scans the surroundings, as if in obedience to some hereditary instinct. Entering the nearby hut, he picks up the Kertel, the milk receptacle. Dangling it on his side, he heads toward the sleeping flock.

Now the moon is out. On the remote edge of the Great Mountain milk-white clouds, shimmering like silver, illuminate the space. On top of the mountain moon beams pour down into the lake below. The shadow thickens over the valley and half of the lowly hills swim in the light.

Ayan makes his way among the lying flock. The procedure of this evening milking is no secret to the animals, many of whom do not even bother to move aside for the shepherd but continue to grind their teeth. The shepherd knows by heart where each ewe is lying. For this special evening fiesta, it is hard to eke out milk from those animals who have already been milked at evening bells. But there are the Baba ewes, the fat ones, as the shepherds say, whose teets resemble never-drying fountains. Whenever you put a pitcher under them, you can be sure you can fill it.

Ayan also knows precisely where they lie. The chosen ewe shakes her head in

slight reluctance. The sweet jingle of the bell hanging from his neck softly filters into the air. The scene is repeated in front of several animals. And Ayan, having now filled his Kertel, returns to the fire place.

Alo is all ready for him. He takes the Kertel, pours the milk into a kettle which has been washed beforehand, and fixes it on the fire stand. Then he walks over to the edge of the hut and fetches the big wooden spoons. When this is done, every man again stretches himself on the ground and watches the sky which by this time is full of stars. They talk about the happenings of the day—the praises of a newly-discovered pasture ground, the eulogy of the cold spring water, and the blessing of a cozy shade. Then they indulge in joke telling, picturesque, and full of profanity, or in reciting a verse of some forgotten song with its burnt tune. Shepherds' thoughts in their usual simplicity take up another few minutes, while yonder, over the slowly rising flame, rests the motionless silhouette of the boiling kettle. The flames lick the sides of the kettle, and sometimes, like huge tongues, roll themselves inside and lap the milk.

Raising himself from his lying position, his cap in one hand, and his girdle kerchief in the other, the young shepherd approaches the kettle, holds it by the upper edges, and takes it down. They must wait until the foam has come to rest and the steam subsided. The initial surface lines pull against one another, and over these, the cream spreads its vibrant network. Soon after, countless crystals, made lovely by the moonlight, come into view, one after another, as if crowding each other for room. On the yellow-white surface, the moon beams break into a thousand fragments, become starlets on the kettle's bronze sides, and a mild vapor, like an imperceptible incense, envelops the kettle, inside and outside. By this time, the cream has hardened.

Yonder, the impatient shepherds break the bread into small crumbs and prepare for

the feast. When the smell of the warm milk tickles Ayan's nostrils, he gives the signal, and instantly, the crumbs are dumped into the milk. The first few dips of the spoon generally are swift, and the reason for this is that each wants to get his rightful share of the surface cream. Later, the shuttle of the spoons is more slow. Sometimes the spoons clash inside the kettle, in an effort to capture an extra crumb. Here, the shepherds chuckle, they jest, and peacefully end their dissertation.

By this time the moon is quite high, and the fire is fast asleep. Beyond the lake, the scintillating flames over the hills, too, are waning. It is time to go to sleep. However, this evening the young shepherd is feeling strongly exhilarated.

"Come on, give us a tune on your flute; now that we are in the mood, let's make it perfect," he implores Ayan, stroking his head, his hair, and his beard.

"Forget it, boy, forget it, this is not the time."

Ayan loves to sell himself dearly, but he has never been known to have broken the heart of a young one. His hand softly gropes for the sleeping flute in his belt, with the soft flesh of his palm he wipes the tip of the instrument, coughs, and gets ready.

"Haideh, let us listen."

The air is now warmer, and the light brighter. From time to time, the jingle of a bell rings over the Yailah, like a wailing note. Ayan is a shrewd minstrel. At the start his tunes are monotonous, slow, and shopworn. The dance tunes overdone by village girls soon tire the listeners.

"Come, come, let's have something more cheerful, give us the tune of Aghven's daughter."

Aghven's daughter's song is an old, old tune, now wholly forgotten. Ayan had learned it in his youth days. He also knew Aghven's daughter. He knew the story. And now the old song flows out more warm, and more lively. At points, the shepherd

takes the flute off his lips, puts it down on his knee, and with head bent low, he sings. The two shepherds follow his strains with rapture. The shepherds have already sold the village. Ineffable thoughts awaken in their minds, nameless desires. A heavy stupor envelops their hearts. All are tortured from the same thought, the same dream.

"Bah! Suppose just now a woman fell from heaven!" The speaker is Alo, the young shepherd.

"What the devil! What the heck are you saying? How well you know the taste of your mouth."

"By jove! Right now how I could hug her and go to bed with her!"

"Damit! What about me? Won't I get a share of it?" cut in Ayan, "I came and am going, my fingers never touched a woman's face."

"Go on, you old fool! Look at your hair, it's turned gray. Trying to get young again? What can you do with a woman?" Alo was animated, as he turned to Kolo who, by this time, was wide awake, listening sharply.

"It is not so, Pal?"

Old Ayan laughed softly at the youth, but could not restrain himself. "You slimy nose, what do you know about the taste of woman? Are you not yesterday's child?"

"Go to, you mean to tell us you're an evening's child?"

"What do you know?"

"I know well enough."

"What in tarnation is going on here? What about me? Don't I get a share of this?" The interrupter was Kolo who plainly was offended for having been left out of the bargain.

"Ha! you alone were left, now that you're in it the picture is complete," Ayan interposed.

"You, you scrawny dog! You stinker! What have you to do with women? Why don't you mind your bald head?"

Alo was already hysterical, and his hands were feverishly moving right and left, as if

looking for a weapon.

Kolo was foaming in the mouth. He jumped to his feet.

"You listen to me, you can't have what you want. The woman will be mine."

Alo, too, was on his feet.

"She'll be mine."

"No, she'll be mine."

"I say she'll be mine."

The two shepherds raised their heavy staffs and approached, ready to hurl themselves at each other.

"She'll be mine." Ayan planted himself between the two.

The shepherds had gone mad. All three raised their staffs, shouting, "She'll be mine, she'll be mine," and hurled themselves at one another. The staffs rose and fell, swiftly, viciously. From their vantage position the dogs ran down to watch the scene. The ewes raised their heads, fearful of the rising pandemonium. The first to fall down was Alo. Kolo followed him. The old man had been spared, more or less, by the two young-

er. And now, raising his staff high, he shouted, "She'll be mine."

Kolo soon recovered himself, but Alo was prostrate on his back. The old man approached him, bent low over him, and seeing a black spot on his face, he said,

"What has happened to you, boy?"

He felt the warm tingle of blood, he almost lost his head. "Kolo, Kolo," he shouted desperately, "run, get some water." He put his head against the youth's heart and breathed more easily as he heard the heart throbs. He sprinkled water over his face, his open chest, and his arm pits. Alo had fainted. The old man continued his first aid, he shook the boy, pulled out his tongue.

"Get up, my child, get up, only get up and let the woman be yours."

"Let her be yours, let her be yours," joined in Kolo too.

A little later, the boy was on his feet, the wound on his head bandaged with tobacco. And the woman was his this time, bought with the price of his blood.



Christ, the Holy Virgin  
and St. Gregory. A  
relief found at Ani.

## TWO LITTLE KNOWN LETTERS OF ENVER PASHA, WRITTEN FROM MOSCOW

By V. VEMIAN



In presenting Enver's two letters as the clinching proof of Turco-Soviet collaboration in the final overthrow of the Independent Armenian Republic and the subsequent loss of considerable Armenian territory, we deem it proper to present to the reader the following historical setting.

In 1920, in Baku, there took place a Congress of the Eastern Peoples under the initiative of the Bolsheviks. This congress was attended by such distinguished Turkish leaders as Enver Pasha, Kutchouk Talaat, Mustafa Soubhi, and Behaeddin Beys, and Captain Ismayil Effendi. There was talk of the imminent attack on Armenia with Russia's approval. The famous Ankara trials of 1926 have brought to light that in the summer of 1920 Khalil Pasha was in Baku, busy with the organization of an Islamic army. The head of this army was an officer of the Soviet Staff. The Soviet supplied the entire cost of arming, equipping, and feeding this army which in the following Armeno-Turkish war became highly useful to Kiazim Karabekir Pasha. The following extract is taken verbatim from the testimony of Nayim Djevad Bey in the 1926 Ankara trial: "I received a telegram from Kiazim Karabekir Pasha in which he ordered—'Nayim Djevad may do whatever he wants to do, just so he brings the Bolshevik army to Nakhitchevan.' I made it sure that in August, 1920, the Turkish and Bolshevik armies united. Then, in accordance with my instructions, I cooperated with Khalil Pasha to make sure that the two armies joined, and that Armenia would be unable to resist."

We also call the reader's attention to the dates of the signing of the Russo-Turkish pact and the Turkish attack on Armenia. According to Enver's second letter, the Russo-Turkish pact was signed on August 24, 1920, while nearly two weeks later, on September 9, 1920, the Turks attacked Armenia from the direction of Olti, without a formal declaration of war. The reader knows the Russo-German treaty was signed on August 23, 1939, while the combined Russo-German attack on Poland took place on September 1, 1939. The analogy is too obvious. The same actors, and the same methods of action.—Editor.



Much has been written in our press during the course of years in regard to friendly relations between Soviet Russia and the Young Turks and the Kemalists after World War I which, as known, eventually culminated in the Russo-Turkish friendship pact. Hidden as they are in the files of newspapers and periodicals, the long list of these documents, unfortunately, are not easily accessible to the research student.

The sinister role which the bloody Enver Pasha played by his negotiations in Berlin and Moscow during 1919-1920 is generally known, and there is no doubt that, in spite of his party's overthrow and his retirement from the Turkish government, he con-

ducted these negotiations with the full knowledge and tacit acquiescence of Mustafa Kemal.

All three parties, Germany, Russia and Turkey, although thoroughly vanquished in World War I, were feverishly at work in those years to resume the struggle against the Allied Powers, and especially against England, in order to recover their lost position by armed force. The chief characters in these negotiations were Enver Pasha for the Turks, Gen. Seckt for the Germans, and Radek, for the Soviets. The name of Enver Pasha speaks for itself to every Armenian. Radek, who together with Zinoviev organized the notorious Pan-Islamic Congress of

Baku, is likewise known to the reader. As to Seckt, briefly, he was a friend of the Turks, and an ardent champion and organizer of the Russo-German rapprochement which culminated in the Treaty of Rappalo of 1922.

In this connection, that which particularly concerns the Armenians are the two letters of Enver Pasha, written in 1920 from Moscow, and addressed to Gen. Seckt in Berlin. They spread new light on the post-war Russo-Turkish friendship which put prostrate Turkey on her feet again, and which played such a fateful and disastrous role for the Armenians.

These two letters which hitherto have been unknown to the Armenians, have been published in a volume dedicated to the German general, entitled "Von Seckt, 1918-1936." A good deal of the material which went into this volume was furnished to the author, Fr. Von Reppenau, by the General's known, and there is no doubt that, in spite of the Turkish government, he con-  
widow. Enver's two letters were written from Moscow whither he had flown from Berlin in April of 1919 to conduct his negotiations with Lenin, Trotsky, and other Soviet leaders. The first of these letters is dated August 25, 1920, and reads as follows:

"Dear friend:

"Today an officer of the Soviet staff called on me. According to his information, the staff is divided between two views. One side wishes to continue the fight against the imperialism of the Allied Powers in collaboration with Western socialist countries, while the other advocates attacking England through India.

"My personal wish is that military operations should be limited this winter to Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan, and that our general offensive on all fronts should begin only after our preparations have been completed during the interim. I would like to know what you think of this plan. I had a conversation here with Commander Trotsky's assistant and have obtained their promise to

send aid of every sort to our army in Asia Minor, but since they themselves are suffering from a shortage of arms and munitions, they cannot spare much. Consequently, they offered to make their purchases of arms to our account in Germany and transfer them through Russia. Confident that you will do your utmost to support this plan, with cordial regards,"

*Devotedly yours,*

(Signed) ALI.

(Ali is Enver's code name)

The second letter is likewise written from Moscow, dated August 26, 1920, and reads as follows:

"Dear friend:

"There is a faction here which is the real government and Trotsky is a member. They want to arrive at an agreement with Germany and are prepared to accept the old boundary of 1914. They realize that the only way to come out of this chaotic world condition lies in their collaboration with Germany and Turkey.

"The other day we signed a *Turco-Russian friendship pact*. On the basis of that pact, the Russians will help us with money and all other means. I deem it highly important that a similar agreement be concluded with a German representative, to make Germany's position equally plain and secure. To insure Russia's help, a volunteer army should be organized and a revolutionary movement promoted inside the Corridor (obviously referring to the Germano-Polish Corridor—A. A.). In three hours I will set out for Baku."

(Signed) ALI.

• • •

These two letters of Enver Pasha's are eloquent documents in confirmation of the Turco-Soviet pact and need no comment. We need only to underline the following words of the second letter: "THE OTHER DAY WE SIGNED A TURCO-RUSSIAN

FRIENDSHIP PACT." If we are not mistaken, chronologically, this is the *first* document which speaks of a Turco-Russ treaty of friendship, as testified to by one of the participants, and *signed* on August 24, 1920, in Moscow, a treaty based on which Soviet

Russia committed herself to help the Turkish army "*with money and all other means.*"

There is a whole story packed inside those few lines, a story so tragic for Armenia and the Armenians. Our young generation should study well this story.

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## LOCAL FROM 129th

VARUJAN BOGHOSIAN

*This mind is labled out of reason,  
Captured in a mood of pure abstract.  
Centered in a time of not believing,  
Season of the shadow in the act.  
All powerless to call it sense or motion,  
Powerless to give it any name,  
And in time to place it out of movement,  
Out of movement, action or restraint.*

*This world, this tense of not belonging.  
This being there but being here instead.  
Waking in the middle of the morning,  
Crying for a name you might have read  
Riding on the El beside a building,  
Riding on a wooden El turned lead.*

# HOW ARMENIA WAS SOVIETIZED

## Part III

By SIMON VRATZIAN

There was nothing left for the government to do except to fulfill its duty to the fatherland, no matter how heavy that duty might be. General Sebouh's division which had charge of liquidating the Alexandropol disturbances was ordered to take decisive action. The Bolsheviks were powerless to resist. "The Revolutionary Committee," writes Borian, "seated in its armored train, issued orders, considered itself the government in Alexandropol and the supreme executive in the country. Without coming out of the armored train, it carried telegraphic negotiations with the government in Yerevan, but no one listened to it, nor could listen, because the people were opposed to it. Factually, the rebels were but a small group who, in the safety of their armored train, waited for the arrival of the Russian army, but the Russian army did not come, nor could come."

Only once, on May 13, did the Revolutionary Committee show any resistance to Sebouh, between the stations of Ani and Aghi, but being defeated, it fled, and finally, convinced that its work was hopeless, it took the road to retreat. Commissar of Interior A. Melkonian made telegraphic contact with S. Torossian, a member of the Parliament, and as "intermediary," between the government and Alexandropol, tried to negotiate, but no one paid any attention to his words. Discouraged by the failure of these attempts, the next day, May 13, the Revolutionary Committee sent a delegation to Sebouh consisting of the Mayor of Alex-

andropol, Levon Sarkisian, the Socialist Revolutionary I. Ter Nersesian, and Dashnag H. Tcholakhian, to arrange an armistice, preliminary to the surrender of Alexandropol to the government's troops. Sebouh demanded the unconditional surrender of the Revolutionary Committee, with his personal promise of safe conduct for the members to Yerevan and his personal intervention with the government in their behalf so that they would not be punished, but would be exiled from Armenia. The delegation asked permission to proceed to Yerevan to negotiate directly with the government, but Sebouh rejected the proposition.

At 10 p.m. the delegation returned to Alexandropol from Aghin and directly appealed to Gen. Hakhverdian. The latter, after stating that the government likewise was opposed to civil war, demanded the unconditional surrender of the Revolutionary Committee and all the ringleaders of the rebellion, Col. Musayelian, Lieutenant Yevangoulov, Artashes Melkonian, and Avis Nourijanian, as well as the return of the armored train intact. These conditions were to be carried out by Gen. Sebouh. To the delegation's request for safety of the lives of the ringleaders and the members of the Rev. Committee, Hakhverdian insisted on unconditional surrender, with a personal promise of supporting Sebouh's intervention in their behalf.

That night, without waiting for the results of the negotiations, the leaders of the rebellion left the armored train and sought

safety in escape. On May 14, at 10 a.m. Col. Vekilov wired the Commander-in-chief from Aghin station, "Sebouh's regiment has executed the government's order. The military force of Alexandropol has expressed its obedience to the government. The armored train is now in our hands. Sebouh's force is now advancing on Alexandropol to take it over and to defend it. Order in the city is perfect. In the name of Sebouh, we express our joy to the government of Armenia and to the honor of Great, Free Armenia. Just now, Sebouh, Gen. Ghamazian and I are leaving for Alexandropol"

Gen. Nazarbekov (Nazarbekian) expressed thanks, and issued orders to restore the peace likewise in Kars and Sarikamish. The same day Musayelian, Melkonian and others were arrested, but Avis Nourijanian succeeded in making his escape to Azerbaijan.

Gradually, the uprisings in the other regions were liquidated. In Itchevan the Bolsheviks succeeded in seizing S. Manasian, Assistant Minister of Interior, N. Zaghedian, President of the Provincial autonomy, Gen. Baghdassarian and several other officers and military men, whom they took captive to Baku.

The ending of the May insurrectionary movements in the crushing defeat of the Bolsheviks was not without grave consequences for the newly-created republic of Armenia. The Bolshevik movement was defeated because neither objectively, nor psychologically, was Armenia suited for the Marxian ideology. It was not a demand emanating from actual conditions of life, but was the work of a few Armenians and aliens who tried to foist a wholly alien ideology on a country and a people whose needs were of an entirely different nature. However, for the sake of the record, it is interesting to note how the Bolsheviks themselves explained their own defeat.

In his letter of June 1, written from his prison cell in Alexandropol, and addressed to the Transcaucasian Regional Committee,

Musayelian throws the blame on the Armenkom and the Bolsheviks of Alexandropol. He writes:

"The Armenkom, on the activity of which I shall present a separate report, unfortunately failed to show the necessary virility at such a grave moment. Finally, as result of the questionings of May 7 and 8, Armenkom sent Dr. Mikaelian and Drastamat Ter Simonian who, seeing the situation, endorsed our decision to come out publicly. After mobilizing the troops, on May 10, the Revolutionary Committee issued its ultimatum for the surrender of the city. This was accomplished without discharging a single shot. It was after this that our internal tragedy began: our local comrades were utterly inept for creative, organic labors. Although the division of labor had been attended to beforehand, after we took over the government, none of them lifted a finger, leaving me to carry the whole burden. On the other hand, I was not physically strong enough to do all this work and meanwhile act as commander of the Red troops. Yerevan already had mobilized the troops against us and yet, the members of the Armenkom did nothing. The troops in entire Armenia were on our side, but we lacked the local talent to direct them. My presence was demanded everywhere but they would not let me leave Alexandropol.

"The government had armed against us the Turkish Armenians, the refugees, the mauserists and Dashnag partisans. Our committee of commissariat did less than nothing. The internal crisis, the lack of provisions, and various other causes compelled us to surrender the city without any struggle."

\* \* \*

The first documentary evidence is the following letter of the Committee of Alexandropol to the Committee of Armenia, edited and signed by Avis Nourijanian:

"Ten to twelve days before May 1, that is to say, before the occupation of Baku,

the Alexandropol Committee of the Communist Party already had adopted such slogans as, 'Long Live Soviet Armenia,' 'Down with the government which is staging the massacres,' etc. Relying on the workers' majority, and especially on the railroad, the Committee decided to come out in public, with a view to appraising the available forces. The revolution in Azerbaijan was a guarantee of our success, and despite the acts of suppression and tempered warnings of the Yerevan government, we were feverishly at work. On April 1, one of our comrades was arrested but a few hours later he was set free with the warning that we should desist from the use of such slogans as, 'Down with the Dashnag government.' Attempts to arrest others resulted in failure. The May 1 affair was a military parade by the proletariat and the troops of Alexandropol with Bolshevik banners and with slogans which had never been heard in the history of Armenia. Our opponents numbered not more than 200 under Dashnag banners while our followers numbered more than 5,000. The overthrow of the Dashnags was complete. At first, everything went on without any incident, but when at the corner of Alexandria Street a mauserist Dashnag tried to start a provocation, right there, in front of the entrance of the Dashnag Bureau, the workers and troops beat up Dashnag teacher-speculator Matzo. In retaliation, the mauserists discharged two shots, wounding one of their comrades.\* Two shots were fired on our side.

"An attempt by our troops to force the prison in order to free our comrades was stopped by an order of the Party Committee in an effort to avoid provoking the Dashnags. Upon the restraining speeches of Avis and others, at 4 o'clock, the demonstration ended, whereas our parade had started at 10 o'clock in the morning. It must be admitted that such a success had been beyond the expectations of the Party. All our de-

mands had been met, the prisoners were freed, and decisions were made to form a council of delegates and to send congratulations to Soviet Azerbaijan. The congratulatory telegram was drafted in sharp, communistic language, stressing the importance of the common fight against the Armenian Musavatist, bandit government, and warmly greeting the workers, the peasants, the troops, and the delegates council of Soviet Azerbaijan. The resolution was adopted unanimously, amid long, ringing applause, and with shouts of 'Hurrah'. If the government was not taken over that day, it was not because we were powerless to do so, but because we were militarily unprepared and were afraid of looting.

"This is the situation today. That same day, committees representing newly-organized military groups called on Musayelian in his armored train for negotiations. Close ties have been established everywhere. All the troops, together with Musayelian's armored train, are with us. Moreover, the greater part of the civil and railroad militia are in our hands. Discipline among the troops is perfect, in fact better than ever, under their leaders. It is impossible to stop over all the details of the complete bankruptcy of the Dashnag Party and our gigantic moral and physical power.

"At all events, seizing the government—which is our wish—is not a question of the day, but a question of the moment. The Dashnag provocation which accuses Soviet Azerbaijan of starting a war with Armenia with the avowed aim of exterminating the Armenians with the full cooperation of Armenian Bolsheviks has been, and now is a complete failure. The provocateurs scarcely escaped a sound beating at the hands of the women and the soldiers. Just now the Dashnags are thinking of disarming the armored train, which is always in readiness under day and night guards. The armored train will never be surrendered to the Dashnags. Its troops, to the last man,

\* Those who fired the shots were Bolsheviks.  
S. V.

have sworn to die rather than surrender it.

"We can always mobilize the troops like one man. The attempt to disarm the armored train will be the signal to the call to arms, daily awaited by us. The decision of the Committee of Armenia to start the revolution from Kazakh in preference to Alexandropol has put us in an untenable position. We are exerting every effort to avoid any conflict, such as arrests, the attempt against the armored train, acts of terror, etc. But, contrary to our expectations, if these things should happen, the call to arms must be issued immediately. This is the unflinching decision of the Alexandropol Committee; under no circumstances shall we permit the decapitation of the masses on whose very power we ourselves rely.

"Kindly instruct us as to what we shall do. We are ready to carry out every decision of the Committee of Armenia, but we warn you, if the latter should demand of us not to retaliate to arrests, to secret terror, and to the attempt against the armored train by immediately seizing the government, we shall absolve ourselves of all responsibility of the consequences which are sure to follow and which must surely be foreseen by the Committee of Armenia. The latter then will be responsible before the Russian Soviet government and before history for wrecking the party organization, and for having postponed by one month, or at least perhaps two months, the seizure of the government. We would like to ask the Committee of Armenia today and now if it agrees with the position we have taken, that is, we shall exert every effort to forestall all excesses until we receive definite instructions by you, but in case of mass arrests, acts of terror from the corners, or any attempt against the armored train, we shall at once issue the call to arms and seize the government. If the Committee of Armenia does not agree to this, we beg you to instruct us immediately.

1—If you are in full accord with our view, kindly make it known to us by the code, Mischa is well.

2—If you think that, in case of necessity, we should surrender the armored train, and to disperse the organization until further instructions by you, merely say, Mischa is dead.

3—Krisha stands for Avis.

4—The hospital stands for the armored train.

5—Medical supplies is for revolution.

6—Our provisions are running low, they will not suffice in case of seizing the government, until fresh supplies from Russia arrive. Send us money at once.

7—Bread and stored goods will suffice for fifteen days. The money has been moved to safety. The rest of the message should be so framed that we can at least guess at the meaning. Today, between 9 and 10 p.m., call by direct line the Alexandropol comrade whom you know and speak with him on the preceding 8 points (he means 7 points—SV.). If you fail by direct line wire comrade \_\_\_\_\_ in Alexandropol (the name is missing—S. V.) in regard to the same points."

(Signed) AVIS

The seal of the Alexandropol Committee  
May 3, 1920.

\* \* \*

It was upon receipt of this flighty and boastful letter that the Armenkom sent Dr. Ter Simonian and A. Melkonian to Alexandropol. Borian was right when he said the Armenkom consisted of men who lacked guts and who were totally void of leadership. The Armenkom, formed in 1919 in a secret meeting, consisted of the following: S. Kassian, A. Mravian, Avis Nourijanian, S. Allahverdian, D. Shavertian, D. Ter Simonian, H. Kostanian, and Gh. Ghookasian. The Armenkom explains the defeat of the rebellion as follows:

"Comrades," wrote Armenkov to the Transcaucasian Regional Committee, "af-

ter the events in Azerbaijan and our victories in northern Caucasus, the general mood here has been altered in our interests. Taking into account all of this, and in view of the resolution of the conference of Armenian organizations in Armenia, in the event of the arrival of Russian troops, or after the revolutions in neighboring republics, the Armenkom has taken preliminary steps for the seizure of the government. The Armenkom has considered Kazakh and simultaneous uprisings elsewhere as the basis of the uprising in Armenia in view of the fact that Kazakh is contiguous with Azerbaijan, and her natives are plucky revolutionaries. To this end, pertinent instructions were sent there. The comrade who came from there was instructed to organize a local Revolutionary Committee, to mobilize the forces, and to be ready for the revolution, meanwhile maintaining ties with the comrades in Azerbaijan. The same was done in regard to Karabagh (approximately at the end of April), but the matter of sending our comrades there was postponed. We were prepared everywhere for the rising on May 1; to us, that day was to be a peaceful demonstration of our military force. The successes of the demonstrations showed that our organization had cast deep roots not only in the masses, but also among the military element. There were places where both the population and the soldiers unanimously rallied to our banners (Karakillisse and Sarikamish). The question of seizing the government was not posed before us that day, but, even then, it was plain that seizing the government was a matter of days. To this end, the organizations were mobilized and we were feverishly at work.

"On May 2, we sent comrade H. Haigaz to Tiflis to negotiate for the coming of S. K. (Kassian) and A. (Askanaz Mravian), as a preparatory measure to the sovietization of Armenia, because, we repeat, we had believed this to be a mere matter of days. On May 2, we were informed of the events of

May 1 in Alexandropol, as well as the congratulatory telegram of Avis to comrade Narimanov in Baku. Although the Armenkom itself had sent a congratulatory letter to Soviet Azerbaijan on May 1, in view of the characteristic tone of Avis' telegram which was unacceptable from the tactical standpoint, the Armenkom, based upon information received from all sides, issued a general greeting.

"On May 3, we received an extensive report concerning the events in Alexandropol, copies of which documents accompany this report. The report gave specific details of the situation in the city and about the armored train. As you will see, the report is full of contradictions and leaves quite an unusual impression. The elemental and unorganized nature of the rising is obvious from their own words that they did not expect such a success in the morning. It is plain that they were wholly unprepared for seizing the government.

"Consider the countless incongruities. Here, they say that the whole army and the population turned over to their side, that the Dashnags rallied scarcely 200, while they had 5,000, and yet they could not seize the government, not because they were powerless, but because they were afraid of lootings and because of their lack of organization. Suddenly, and in one stroke, the armored train is in their possession, a thing which makes the seizure of the government a matter of not days, but moments. The troops, organized in the course of one day, swear they will die to the last man before surrendering, and yet, comrades, you know how they behaved when the time for fighting came. Furthermore, comrades, you must note that those in Alexandropol tied the seizure of the government with impending arrests and acts of terror in the corners of the streets. At the same time they report that provisions are low and that they cannot wait until the arrival of fresh supplies from Russia, etc., etc.

"In view of these sanguine descriptions—Comrade Avis' perpetual rapturous outbursts to the point of adventurism (we have in mind his action of five months ago in Baku where he proclaimed to the whole world the complete triumph of communism in Armenia and of the bankruptcy of the Dashnags), and to think that they were doing all this while seated in the armored train, nervous and tense from fear of arrests, suppression, and acts of terror in the corner of the streets,—we were convinced that all this was grossly exaggerated, and that, whatever was happening there, the upshot of the matter was a question of saving their skins, etc.

"Moreover, we were convinced that their success could not have been a permanent one, lacking as it was a universal quality, and in view of the obvious fact that all local and independent uprisings are doomed to failure. In our view, Kazakh was to be the focal point; this was the original plan of the Armenkom, and this plan was communicated to the Alexandropol Committee with the request that they liquidate peacefully the work which they had begun, or at least string it along. The Bolsheviks of Alexandropol would not consider it. 'Why' they asked, 'begin from Kazakh, and not from Alexandropol?'—this was their reply 'We are even opposed to associating the two events from the beginning.' They put the question on a basis of priority, apparently from a viewpoint of sportsmanship.

"They began bombarding us with their demands to sanction their action, whereas, it turned out that all this was already an accomplished fact, and there is no doubt now that their communications were deliberately worded the way they were in order to throw the blame of the failure of their action on the Armenkom. Thus, curiously enough, there was a Soviet government, and yet the ringleaders of the rebellion for 12 days parked in their armored train and would not come out. It is plain that, had they been in

earnest, by the logic of the events, they would have developed their initial success by extending it over the neighboring regions, and even would have advanced on Yerevan.

"On May 5 we received a messenger from Alexandropol, a railroad employee, whose oral information in regard to the events of May 1 was basically contrary to the communications of Avis. This discrepancy was noted by the Armenkom. Incidentally, the messenger said that the comrades in Alexandropol were in high spirits, etc., etc. He also brought along a letter from Alexandropol. The same night we received another telegram signed by A. and M.\* to be communicated by radio by us to Comrade Narimanov in Baku. A like telegram, at the moment, we deemed positively impermissible, in view of the obvious provocation which it surely would engender. It would have definitely wrecked our organizations. Do not forget, comrades, that we were defeated because an insufferable atmosphere around Azerbaijan had been created, they had incited national antagonisms, and they were preparing anti-Musullman revolutions everywhere in Armenia of which we shall speak later. In those days, the situation was under the control of the mauserists of Sassoun, Zeitun, and Van, principally Turkish Armenians. Question: why was all this necessary for the comrades of Alexandropol? The telegram definitely was a piece of advertisement which would harm the cause greatly, inasmuch as our enemies were already talking about the rebellions in Zanki Bazar and Beyoukverdi.

"At the same time M. ordered the armored train near Ghamarlu to advance on Alexandropol. It was obvious that we had to do here with an accomplished fact, and therefore we decided to intervene by giving the rebellion a sort of organized appearance until operations were begun in other places, including Yerevan. We could do no other.

\* Avis Nourijanian and Musayelian

Accordingly, the very next day, May 6, we sent comrades D. and A. to Alexandropol,\* with full powers to halt the rebellion at all cost, meanwhile establishing contacts with the regions of Karakillisse, the neutral zones, and other adjoining regions.

"Meanwhile, here, our military was carrying on feverish labors. Contact was established with the division stationed in Kanaker, and when on May 7 we received a letter from D. and the late A. advising us that they were faced with an accomplished fact and urging the necessity of agitating the military units and supporting their efforts in the region of New Beyazid, we did all we could to cooperate with them. At our instructions, on May 9-10, our late comrade Saroukhanian proceeded to New Beyazid where he carried out his mission by commencing the operations.

"It must be noted here that the powerful organization in New Beyazid, which also included the military, having been shattered in the middle of April, our comrades, headed by comrade Saroukhanian and an officer, were banished from New Beyazid. The night of the 6th, and the morning of the 7th, an orgy of unprecedented persecutions were started here, obviously in repercussion of the Alexandropol uprising. Naturally, we became an illegal organization, although we did not lose our ties with the central organization.

"The next day, May 8, we asked those military leaders with whom we had established ties if they could start local risings at once but they replied that the troops were not yet ready, that more labor was needed, except those units advancing in the direction of Alexandropol who promised to go over to the rebels' side. This was at one o'clock in the morning. The atmosphere gradually was thickening. The newspapers were busy

with unusual exposures, extraordinary tribunals were set and the death penalty was decreed for the rebels. The Parliament had already adjourned. Intent on retaining the government, the Dashnags instigated provocations against the Turkish movement in Zankibasar, Parakar, and other regions, shut the water supplies, seized the animals, etc. The newspapers freely announced that the movement had been organized by the Bolsheviks. They armed to the teeth everyone, beginning with the speculators to the gymnasts. The Dashnag Party had taken up the gauntlet. Some of us factually were proclaimed outside the pale of the law. They even arrested those who had casually met us.

"Yet, even under these circumstances work continued, and not for one moment did the Armenkom lose contact with the organizations. It must be observed that, in the initial stages, few of our active comrades were arrested. On May 8-9 our printing press was closed, as a result of which, the little tabloid which we had prepared three days before in which we had tried to clear the poisonous atmosphere created around Azerbaijan, was never printed. On May 12 the newspapers announced the negotiations between Alexandropol and the government's representatives. The Dashnags wrote: 'The rebels of Alexandropol are begging for mercy.' That cast a heavy impression on all. On May 13, our comrades surrendered the city without a fight, and very naturally, everything was settled as far as we were concerned. Thus, after having swiftly seized the government, they surrendered it as swiftly.

"As later was seen, during this time no newspapers had been published in Alexandropol; had they held out three more days, matters would have taken an entirely different course, because, after the fall of Alexandropol, began the uprising in New Beyazid region under the direction of comrade Saroukhanian. There, the opinion prevailed that Alexandropol was still holding out.

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\* Drastamat Ter Simonian and Artashes Melkonian.

As a matter of fact, there was a moment when the government troops were on the verge of retreating, but, finally, their numerical superiority (recruited by the mauserists returning from Alexandropol), combined with the treason of one of our companies, after a stubborn resistance of 4-5 days, settled the issue in favor of the government. Our comrades who had been eye witnesses of all these events, later reported the whole thing to the Armenkom.

"Thus, after a stubborn resistance, New Beyazid surrendered. A part of the rebels retired to the mountains, another part was arrested, and a few, headed by comrade Saroukhanian, were executed. They treated comrade Saroukhanian something terrible, just like the inquisitors. Two horsemen holding on to his arms on either side, dragged him through the city. Our comrades saw him stretched senseless in a wagon. He was executed by an order of the military court. As to his alleged last words recorded in "Harach" (Forward), the whole thing is fantastic.

"The uprising in Khazah likewise started after the Alexandropol affair, and even after the fall of New Beyazid. Three days before, one of our comrades had been sent to Dilijan to bring information. We now know, as you too know, that Soviet troops entered the place and took the Dashnags captive. The uprisings in Kars and Sarikamish, likewise were suppressed by the government. Naturally, we could not resort to reckless adventurism. As to the rebellion in Igdir, where the military organization was powerful and dependable, we gave it our consent. At present, their entire staff (5 military and 5 civilian) are in the prison of Yerevan.

"As you yourselves will see, thorough preparations were made everywhere; that was not a mere accidental or unfounded rebellion, never. If the movement ended in a fiasco, the reason was the premature uprising of Alexandropol. It being impossible

to organize the operations swiftly everywhere, or to coordinate the local operations, and due to the lack of railway communications in the various regions, we could neither obtain the necessary information, nor coordinate the operations. That would not have been the case two weeks later. At present the whole city of Yerevan is under martial law. They tell terrible stories, such as wholesale arrests in the streets. Every Dashnag member is availing himself of the right of arrest, in the streets, as well as in private homes.

"Party labors have not ceased here. Every day the comrades receive instructions. Ten days ago we held an extraordinary civil conference in which the report of the Armenkom was read. A Civic Bureau was elected which temporarily will assume the functions of the Civic Committee. The Bureau holds daily sessions; we have organized a 'Red Cross' which attends to the needs of the prisoners. We are resuming our ties with the regions with a view to restoring the organizations. At present the Armenkom consists of two persons. We are holding fast on to our post but we cannot hold out much longer in Yerevan. We are in daily danger of being arrested, because that is the decision of the Dashnag Party.

"With the legalization of our party in Azerbaijan, means must be sought to restrain the Dashnags. Send us more comrades. Don't let them set the Dashnags in Baku free; they are already confounded by that situation. We have sent comrades to Dilijan to revive our organizations in that region. We are doing the same for Karakilis. Few comrades are available for the regions. This, in broad outline, is the general situation, our attitude toward the events and our appraisal of them. We are prepared at all times to complement this with our oral reports, if necessary. Today we received information that mauserist companies have been dispatched, and others are being dispatched to Karabagh. They

are also surrounding the region of Zangibasar."<sup>2</sup>

(Signed) R. K. K. The Committee of Armenia (ARMENKOM)

Whatever the excuses of Armenkom and other responsible Bolsheviks, the fact remains the same, namely, at the gravest moment of Armenia's political life, the Armenian Bolsheviks did not desist from raising disturbances inside the country, and from attempting to overthrow and seize the government of free and independent Armenia by promoting fratricidal civil war and by armed rebellion. That treason was frustrated by the will of the Armenian people, but not without inflicting incalculable harm on the country, internally and externally.

## VII

### *The Plottings of Armenian and Azerbaijani Bolsheviks Against Armenia*

The May uprising, although ending in the smashing defeat of the Bolsheviks, was costly to the Armenian people. More than ever, Armenia was in need of internal and external peace. It should be borne in mind that this was 1920. The newly-created state had just risen to its feet, and the country was feverishly busy with reconstruction. Both the government and the people, having strained every energy, and with unusual spirit of sacrifice, were trying to heal the old wounds and to build up an economic and political structure—organizing the state, the settlement of disputed questions with neighboring states, the

drafting of peace treaties, repatriation, a foreign loan, establishment of the gold standard, regularizing the means of communication, internal order, economic and cultural enterprises, the settlement of the land question, supplying seed grain, with government aid, to insure the supply of bread. . . . He who was in Armenia at the beginning of 1920 will recall the unusual enthusiasm which prevailed in the land.

The Bolshevik disturbances dealt a terrific blow to that creative impetus, shook the course of internal life, and greatly discredited the Armenian government in the eyes of the outside world. Suffice it to say that, during the best season of the year, for a whole month, the people were busy with the defense of the fatherland, instead of attending to their work. The ploughing and sowing in the mountainous regions which had just begun, was interrupted. The cessation of railway transportation cut off the arrival of fresh supplies from the outside world, thus intensifying the already strained economic condition. Production and business came to a standstill. Driven into civil war, the army became demoralized. Such alien races as the Turks and the Malakans (Russians) revolted against the government. The resultant decline of the Armenian government's prestige, on the eve of the signing of the peace treaties, heavily redounded on the Republic's international standing.

It is impossible that the Armenian Bolsheviks did not see or realize all this; however, they continued their fight against the government of Armenia with increased zeal, trying from their headquarters in Azerbaijan and Russia this time to incite the enmity of the Turks and the Russians against "Dashnag" Armenia. It should be stated that no mean role was played by the Armenian Bolsheviks in the unfriendly attitude of the Russian Bolsheviks toward the Republic of Armenia. It is safe to say

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\* In this report, like the one submitted by Avis, there are many incorrect charges against the government of Armenia and the Dashnag Party. We deem it a waste of time to enter into their details. The value of the documents is to be found in the confessions of the Bolsheviks themselves. S. V.

that, were it not for the malicious interventions and the perpetual plottings of the Armenian Bolsheviks, and had the leaders of Armenia been free in their relations with the Russians, a good share of the calamities which befell the Armenians could have been spared.

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At the outset of the Soviet revolution, the relations between the representatives of Armenia and the Russian Bolsheviks were far from being hostile. On the contrary, there are numerous proofs showing clearly that a mutual understanding was quite within the realm of possibility, in spite of the Bolsheviks' obvious turcophile sentiments, and their willingness to sacrifice the Armenian cause in the interests of the Turks.

As early as the middle of 1918, upon the appeal of the Council of Armenia, the Soviet government, in the person of Leon Trotsky, volunteered to place at the disposal of the Armenians considerable quantities of war material, and to permit the free entrance into Armenia of those Armenian soldiers and officers who had served in the Russian army, to join the newly-created Armenian army. During the hectic days of Baku, when Bolsheviks were in disfavor, the two notorious Bolshevik leaders, Stepan Shahoumian and H. Nazaretian, owed their lives to the Dashnags who gave them shelter against the pursuit of the Mensheviks. It was with the consent of the Dashnags that, in the spring of 1918, upon the recommendation of Aram, and with funds supplied by him, the noted Bolshevik P. Makintzian (now executed by the Bolsheviks) went to Moscow in order to solicit the aid of Russia against the Turkish peril which threatened the Armenian people.

The Armeno-Bolshevik cooperation in

Baku against the Turco-Azerbaijan army which lasted several months is known to all. It was from here that, in May of 1918, upon the agreement of Stepan Shahoumian and the Armenian National Council, a delegation consisting of A. Chilingarian (Reuben Darbinian) and Simon Hagopian went to Moscow to solicit an increased degree of military aid to Baku. At that time there functioned in Moscow the so-called Armenian Committee which busied itself generally with Armenian affairs, and in particular, with the transference of Armenian troops to the Caucasus front. This committee included a number of distinguished Armenians, headed by Prof. Djivelekian. Being friendly disposed, the Soviet government had put at the disposal of this committee the Lazarian Seminary, a huge building, which had been converted into a sort of Armenian center. Here were stored the arms of those Armenian troops who were preparing to leave for the Caucasus. In a special decree, Muraloff, the military chief of Moscow, had guaranteed the inviolability of the building. The Armenian Committee welcomed the representatives of Baku with open arms.

The same cordial reception was extended by the Soviet central government which assured the delegation of its full-hearted support. Quite the contrary was the case with the Armenian Bolsheviks, chief among whom, Vahan Terian, Pogos Makintzian, and others used their every means to frustrate the delegation's mission, not even stopping at actual betrayals, and representing the Armenian Committee as a counter-revolutionary center. As a result of this intervention, the Cheka searched the Lazarian Institute, seized the effects and the stored up arms, and closed the Armenian Committee.

The antagonism sprouted, and was gradually intensified from the day the Armenian

Bolsheviks, realizing their inaptitude to occupy high posts in Russia, turned their interest to Armenia proper. Many of them, being of mediocre stature, or even below, realized that they had no chance of promotion in Russia, while Armenia offered them many opportunities for high positions and even governmental posts. To this was added the old hatred of the Dashnags, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, which having cast deep roots in Armenian life, had crowded out all other small factions, including the Bolsheviks, from Armenian national life.

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We have already seen the extent of the Armenian Bolsheviks' enmity to the Armenian Republic and the Armenian leadership in particular inside Armenia. That enmity was intensified to fanatical proportions especially after the suppression of the May uprisings, and was continued outside with the collaboration of Russian and Azerbaijanian Bolsheviks. Although ostensibly under the anti-Dashnag banner, the fight was directed in reality at Armenia, causing untold harm to the Armenian people.

The principal weapon of the Armenian Bolsheviks was the lie and the slander. What poisonous lies they invented in order to discredit the leaders of Armenia! The following excerpt from an article of H. Hagopian, representative of the communist party, and Costia Ayvazian, member of Dilichan's Revolutionary Committee, published in May 28th issue of the Baku newspaper "Communist," is a typical example of Bolshevik extravaganza in lying:

"On May 12, the proletariat of poverty-stricken peasantry of Alexandropol, in collaboration with the troops, overthrew the hated government of the Dashnags, and started its march toward Kars, Sarikamish,

Karakilisse, and Yerevan. In retaliation, the Dashnags staged an external war against the inhabitants of Beyouk Vedi, and the Kurds of Igdir, Sarikamish, and Kars, to divert the red army, while they rallied an army of 3,000 mauserists, and with the collaboration of hired officers of Denikin's army, attacked the small garrison of Red Alexandropol. After massacring 2,000 defenseless workers and peasants, they reestablished their counter-revolutionary government. The Dashnags' terroristic system is something terrible; they shoot every communist on the spot."

No matter how brazen and baseless these lies were, the harm they did to Armenia was incalculable. Armed with their lies and slanders, the Armenian Bolsheviks were appealing to Moscow at the very moment the Republic's delegation, headed by Levon Shant, was in the midst of negotiating with the Soviet central government. The Shant delegation, which had arrived in Moscow on May 20, was authorized to sign a treaty of peace on the following conditions:

1. Soviet Russia must recognize the independence of Armenia, as well as the inclusion of Karabagh and Gulistan within the Armenian boundary.
2. Soviet Russia must accept at least in principle the annexation of Turkish-Armenian provinces to Armenia.
3. Soviet Russia must not interfere with the internal affairs of Armenia; must desist from communist activity in Armenia.
4. Soviet Russia must permit the return of Armenian emigrants now residing in Northern Caucasus and Russia.

To these important stipulations were added a number of minor conditions. The negotiations were started with every assurance of success and on June 10 Shant wired Yerevan, advising that the Russo-Armenian treaty was almost completed and that it would be signed in one or two days. But, 20 days later, Shant sent a second

telegram with an entirely different import:

"From our very first interview," Shant said, "it was plain that our only difficulty would be the rectification of the Azerbaijan boundary. The Bolsheviks of Baku are doing their best to prevent the signing of the treaty. The Soviet government admits the justice of our demands and is averse to satisfying the wishes of Azerbaijanian and Armenian Bolsheviks. Nevertheless, upon the latter's stubborn insistence, and as a result of their false information, the signing of the treaty is being delayed. The leaders of Soviet Azerbaijan wish to take advantage of Russian troops to put across the Musavatist plan by occupying the indisputable Armenian territories of Karabagh and Zangezour, in order to establish their position among the Turkish inhabitants. Russia wants to play the role of umpire in the Armeno-Tartar controversy. The Moscow government has also expressed its willingness to act as arbitrator in the Turkish-Armenian question between Armenia and Mustafa Kemal."

Who were those "Armenian Bolsheviks" who, having joined the Bolsheviks of Azerbaijan, were bearing pressure on Moscow, and demanding not to sign the treaty with the Armenian delegation? Two of these have been mentioned in our discussion,—Anastas Mikoyan (present member of the Politburo in Moscow) and Avis Nourijanian. Other noted communists in Baku at the time were S. Kassian, A. Mravian, and others. These, in cooperation with the Azerbaijanians, used every effort to prevent the Shant delegation from coming to an agreement with Chicherin and Karakhan. And they succeeded. Having sent a special delegation of their own to Moscow, including Mikoyan and Avis, they succeeded in persuading the Soviet government to delay the signing of the treaty and to transfer the negotiations to Yerevan, to which end the Soviet government designated Legran as its

plenipotentiary. The game of the Azerbaijan and Armenian Bolsheviks was plain. By procrastinating the treaty and by creating an accomplished fact by the presence of Russian troops, they wanted to make the sovietization of Armenia inevitable.

And indeed, in the very midst of the negotiations, on July 5, divisions of the 11th Red Army invaded Zangezour via Karabagh. They fought their way to Goris and approached the border of Daralagiaz. The Armenian army under the command of Dro counter-attacked and reoccupied the whole of Zangezour. The panicky Bolsheviks fled, after having brutally killed Vahan Khoreni and Arshak Shirinian, both members of the Armenian Parliament, and fifteen local national leaders.

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After the arrival of reinforcements, the Russian army attacked anew Zangezour, reoccupied Goris, and moved toward Ghaphan which became the seat of bloody fights for three weeks until the Armenian divisions, under heavy enemy pressure, withdrew from Zangezour, while the Russians joined the rebellious Turks of Nakhitchewan. Meanwhile, on July 20, Legran, accompanied by Khalil Pasha and Azerbaijanian and Armenian communists, arrived in Baku. From here, Khalil Pasha took charge of the "Islamic army" and headed for Turkey via Karabagh-Zangezour-Nakhitchewan, while Legran, accompanied by the leaders of Azerbaijan, and after having consulted with the commander of the 11th army, left for Tiflis with the intention of proceeding to Yerevan.

In addition to Zangezour, the Russian army was attacking Armenia from the direction of Kazakh but here, having met with a stubborn resistance of the Armenians, it had been unable to advance further. Thus, Armenia was caught between the two pin-

cers of the Red army from the north and the east. Desirous of making an end to the useless bloodshed, the Armenian government appealed to Moscow's mediation, and on August 10, in Tiflis, a temporary peace agreement was signed between Legran and the representatives of the Armenian government whereby the regions of Zangezour, Karabagh, and Nakhitchewan were ceded to the Bolsheviks. Weakened by the May uprising and the ensuing civil war, the Armenians were unable to resist the Russian army and were obliged to accept the harsh terms of August 10. On the same day, in Paris, the Treaty of Sevres was signed.

### VIII

#### *The Armeno-Turkish War and The Bolsheviks*

On September 14 the Shant delegation returned from Moscow to Yerevan to continue the negotiations with Legran, but the latter was in no hurry and lingered in Tiflis until October 10. When on the 11th he arrived in Yerevan at the head of a delegation of 47\*, Armenia already was at war with Turkey. While in Baku and Tiflis, Legran had paved the way for the sovietization of Armenia.

As we have seen there was a clear line of cooperation among the Bolsheviks, the Azerbaijanians, the Ittihadists, and the Kemalists, and the occupation of Karabagh-Zangezour-Nakhitchewan by the Red army was a part of this plan. Turkish military operations against Armenia, likewise, were a part of the same plan. Oliver Baldwin,

who at the time was in Armenia and was familiar with the events, was right when he said the Turks' war against Armenia was prompted by the Russians in order to squeeze the Dashnags.

The government of Armenia was aware to a certain extent of the Turkish plans and of the existence of a united Turco-Bolshevik front. In the summer of 1920 Yerevan was in possession of the originals of Mustafa Kemal's speeches in the Grand National Assembly, as well as the correspondence between Ismet Pasha and Kiazim Karabekir Pasha in regard to questions pertaining to Armenia. It was obvious that the Turks were planning to attack Armenia and to this end they were negotiating with the Bolsheviks. In the Grand National Assembly, Mustafa Kemal disclosed that soon a Turkish delegation would leave for Moscow via Kars and Batum, and that on June 6 the Turkish command had received orders to prepare for the seizure of the Sarikamish-Soghanlu pass. But at that very moment, according to Mustafa Kemal, one of the members of the Turkish delegation to Moscow had returned, bearing with him letters from Chicherin, and that a Russian agent had arrived in Karin (Erzerum). Moscow proposed to mediate in the settlement of the boundaries between Persia, Armenia, and Turkey. "But," continued Mustafa Kemal, "seeing no discrepancy between the Bolshevik proposal and our previous decisions, we ordered our eastern command to expedite the attack as soon as possible."

But because the Turks needed the Bolshevik aid, Ankara deemed it wise to postpone the war operations for the time being. Decidedly opposed to this idea was Kiazim Karabekir Pasha who, despite Mustafa Kemal's orders to the contrary, wanted to start the attack on Armenia on his own responsibility, especially because, as we have seen, from the Ankara trials, he was

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\* The delegation included Sahak Ter Gabrielian (who later became president of the Council of the Peoples' Commissars of Armenia), A. Hovhannissian (later secretary to the Armenian Communist Party), and other Armenian and Russian Bolsheviks, who came, not to negotiate, but to disrupt Armenia from within.

assured of the cooperation of Ittihadist agents in Russia and of the consent of the Bolsheviks of Azerbaijan. To this end there were some negotiations between the rebellious Pasha and Ismet Pasha. The latter, in a letter at once hortatory and threatening, dated August 1, 1920, demanded that Kiazim Karabekir should desist from "separate operations" and not to impede "the events which shall decide the fate of our people and even the fate of the entire Mohammedan world." Ismet argued that Armenia, which at the time was busy with the Turkish ally Azerbaijan, was little likely to attack Karabekir. "Khalil Pasha, who is one of the commanders of the Turkish-Azerbaijanian-Russian forces, has put us at ease, assuring us that in the event Armenia attacks our border, her flank will be endangered by said forces." And Ismet demanded that Kiazim Karabekir Pasha direct his divisions toward the Greek front.

Unwilling to conform with this demand, Karabekir left for Ankara the beginning of September personally to persuade Mustafa Kemal and Ismet of the imperative necessity of attacking Armenia at once. His task became all the more easy by the fact that the Sevres Treaty had ceded to Armenia the greater part of the four Turkish-Armenian provinces on the one hand, and the mutual cooperation pact, signed between the Turks and the Bolsheviks at the Baku Congress of Eastern Nations, on the other. Kutchuk Talaat and others, accompanied by an Islamic division, and loaded with Bolshevik gold, already had arrived in Karin, (Erzerum), assuring Karabekir of the Bolsheviks' consent and aid. Thereupon, Ankara yielded, giving Karabekir's army the green light. On September 23 the Turkish-Armenian war had begun.

Three weeks later Legran and his multi-fold delegation arrived in Yerevan, and the very next day Legran presented Moscow's terms. These were: 1. to renounce the

Sevres Treaty, 2. to give Soviet troops free passage through Armenia to join Mustafa Kemal's army and to fight the Allies, 3. Soviet Russia to mediate in Armenia's border disputes with her neighbors.

The government of Armenia peremptorily rejected the first point but agreed to all other demands. In a few days the two parties came to an agreement. The preliminary draft of the treaty provided chiefly,

1. Soviet Russia recognizes the independence and inviolability of Armenia.

2. The region of Zangezour will be annexed immediately to Armenia, while the questions of Karabagh and Nakhitchevan will be resolved by arbitration.

3. Soviet Russia should intervene at once to put a stop to the Armeno-Turkish war.

4. The 1914 boundary would be declared a neutral zone, and the Armeno-Turkish boundary dispute should be resolved through Russia's friendly mediation.

5. The government of Armenia agrees to give Russian troops free passage to Turkey. Armenia is to receive 30% of the transported war material.

6. Armenia accepts Soviet Russia's mediation in her territorial disputes with neighboring nations.

7. Soviet Russia agrees to pay Armenia two and a half million rubles in gold, to permit free entry of coal oil, to lend agricultural implements, to return the effects of Etchmiadzin which had been carried away to Moscow, to aid in the return of Armenian refugees, and so forth.

Legran was to take the preliminary draft to Baku, obtain Moscow's approval, and to return to Yerevan in order to sign the treaty. He went but did not return until the outcome of the Armeno-Turkish war. Alexander Khatissian was right when he observed: "In following a policy of negotiation, the Bolsheviks pursued only one aim, namely, to gain time and to lull us to

sleep, while in reality Armenia was being squeezed in the iron link of Turko-Bolshevik forces.”\*

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In this respect, the answer of Soviet representative Stark is quite significant. He did not refute the existence of Turco-Soviet collaboration but contented himself with attacking Armenia.

“You wish,” he said, “to know our attitude toward the events transpiring within the boundaries of Armenia? I answer. From the very first day of its existence, the peasant-workers republic of Russia resolved to recognize the national right to self-rule, even to the extent of secession and independence. We recognized that right not only in words, but in actions. We recognized the independence of Estonia, Lithuania, Finland, and Poland. We have recognized, and still do recognize the independence of Armenia, as long as that is the wish of the Armenian working people. Our policy has been one of peace. For the blood we have spilt on numerous fronts, the sin is not ours. That blood is on the Allies. In the east we are helping and defending oppressed nations against the Allies. To us, the interests of our Armenian working masses is very precious. Precious, too, are the interests of the workingmen of Persia, India, and Turkey. But the Federation (Dashnags) has gone over to the imperialists’ side and has made Armenia a tool in their hands. The Armenian people must choose one of the two—do they want to go along with us, or will they keep on in their old policy?”

It is all too plain. The Turks are not to blame—not a word of condemnation for

them—when they attacked the war-weary, defenseless Armenian workingmen. The Federation is the only sinner.

The Turks’ attack on Armenia was the cause of great delight among the Armenian Bolsheviks. The newspaper “Communist” of Tiflis jubilantly wrote in its issue of October 24: “We can only rejoice now that Dashnag Armenia is in the position of that goring cow whom God has deprived of her horns.” The Baku newspaper “Communist” devoted eulogistic editorials to Mustafa Kemal. In Bolshevik meetings the Turks were freely praised because “they were coming to liberate the workingmen of Armenia.”

What were the Armenian Bolsheviks doing at that time? Did they give the defense of Armenia a moment’s thought? The Baku newspaper “Communist” published a general call addressed to all the workers and the peasants of the Caucasus and the world, signed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia. The call was an abominable composition full of lies, slanders, profanity, and threats. At the very moment when the people of Armenia were waging a fight of life and death against the assassin Turks, the Armenian Bolsheviks, having joined their Azerbaijanian comrades, were spewing thunder and fire on the head of Armenia. “The dark dank dungeons of Armenia,” wrote the Avises and the Mikoyans, “which snuffed many a life in the days of the bloody Tsars, have now been converted into government temples where the mauricists hold bloody feasts on the fate of Armenian communists. Only by crushing the communist workingmen’s movement in Armenia did the Dashnags convert Armenia into a hopeful imperialist beach head to fight against the revolution in the east.

“When the whole of the East is aflame with the fire of rebellion, when the Congress of Eastern peoples adjures them to arise

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\*Alexander Khatissian, *The Origin and Development of the Armenian Republic, 1930*, Athens, p. 228.

and rally around the International Communist banner to give the death blow to international imperialism, the white bandit government of Armenia ravages Armenia with fire and sword, wrecks the workers and artisans organizations, and having joined the English and American imperialists, is preparing a new Golgotha for the revolutionary masses of the East. . . .

"We vow before the blood-drained workers and peasants masses, that we shall never bow the head to the base provocation of those bandit gangs. . . . Death to the oppressors of the workers and the peasants of Armenia."

Not one word about the war, not one word about the Turks who were massacring the "workers" of Armenia. The Armenian Bolsheviks of course knew well that the Turks had risen against Armenia with the approval and active support of the Soviet government. The Turks were closer to their hearts than the "white, bandit government of Armenia."

But the Armenian Bolsheviks' fight against the government of Armenia was not confined to words alone. They tried actively to serve the cause of Kiazim Karabekir. During the war, many Bolsheviks infiltrated among those called to universal military service or among the volunteer bands who had come from abroad. These secretly propagated defeatist ideas among the soldiers and tried to incite them against both the government and the military command. They tried to convince the Armenian soldiers that it was not the Turks who were attacking Armenia, but it was the "Dashnags" who had started the war, that the Turks were the friends of the Bolsheviks and the Soviet government, that the Turkish army includes many Armenian and Russian military men, and lastly, that the Turks advancing on Armenia would not massacre the Armenians, but only would overthrow the "Dashnag" government and

help establish the Soviet order in Armenia.

The Armenian soldier, weary, fatigued, and cut off from his home and his work, avidly listened to these secret whisperings, and their argument seemed logical to him. Why should he keep on fighting when the Turk and the Russian are united, he reasoned, why fear the massacres when the Turkish soldiers was advancing under the red banner, hand in hand with the Russian soldiers? How long would this ruinous, insufferable war keep on? Great Russia was coming, she would restore the order and the peace, she would bring bread and clothing. Such words were like music to the ears of the Armenian peasant and the city dweller who for years had lived a turbulent life. To put an end to the war, to go home and be at rest under the protection of the Russian army—what could be more alluring than this?

In his "The Workers and Peasants Masses of Armenia" (Vol. II, p. 121), the Bolshevik historian Borian writes:

"Russia is our friend, the Bolsheviks are our liberators and saviors," and they would not fight against the Turks in the firm conviction that the Turks were coming at the behest of the Russians, "in the hope that they would help the Bolsheviks to overthrow the Dashnag government and establish a workers and peasants government in Armenia."

Borian, however, puts the blame on the Armenian government for having deliberately spread false news about Turco-Bolshevik friendship. This is both untrue and absurd. In the first place, Turco-Bolshevik friendship was an indisputable fact. Secondly, it is absurd to think the government would disseminate news which was unfavorable to itself. The fact is, the Armenian Bolsheviks, blinded by their hatred of the Dashnags, and hoping to destroy the independence of Armenia with the aid of the Turks resorted to all conceivable means

to break the resistance of the Armenian army.

In the region of Kars and Alexandropol, the Armenian command has recorded more than one instance of defeatist propaganda and desertion. There were arrests and trials. This writer was an eye witness of such cases in Kars and personally interrogated the deserter officer Karakash and others who had been caught in the act of defeatist propaganda and desertion. This was especially true of the Bolsheviks of Alexandropol. The very moment when Kiazim Karabekir's army had occupied the whole of Vanand and had entered the region of Shirak, having spread destruction, pillage and massacre all around, the Armenian Bolsheviks of Alexandropol, through their plottings and provocative fliers were promoting insubordination among the soldiers, and were calling on them to direct their bayonets, not against the enemy, but against their own government. There even were Bolsheviks bearing the Armenian name who entered into direct communication with the Turkish command and, with their encouragement, fought against the government of Armenia.

All these were brought to light after the war and the Armenian Bolsheviks were convinced by the scars on their own skin that they had been badly fooled. The following is told by Dr. A. Babalian, a minister of the Armenian government who, after the fall of Kars, fell prisoner to the Turks:

"On the fifth day of our captivity, five Armenians came to see us, sporting red clothes, and accompanied by several Tur-

kish officers. They were the Armenian communists of Kars who made the rounds of public concentration quarters and betrayed their enemies to the Turks. They were members of the so-called Revolutionary Committee. The Turkish officers had made them believe that they would turn Kars over to the Bolshevik government; they pampered this communist riff raff who, in return, played the stool pigeon, tipped them off on munition stores, or supplied valuable information on the position, the strength, and the morale of the Armenian army."

But the newspaper "Communist" of Baku goes even farther: In its issue of No. 42 it writes:

"On October 30, the vanguard of the Turkish force occupied Kars. Until the entry of the Turkish troops, the Armenian soldiers were firmly convinced that the troops attacking Kars were Bolsheviks, and for that reason they offered no resistance to the Turks. The same opinion was shared by the working people of Kars who were absolutely convinced that the troops attacking with red banners were the Turkish revolutionary army. But once these troops entered the city, they spared neither women, children, nor the aged. For fully five days, these blood-thirsty soldiers and the Kurds perpetrated atrocities beyond imagination upon the peaceful people. They massacred exceptionally the Armenians. They looted the city with wanton zest. They even didn't spare the communists who presented certificates of identification. In Kars alone 5,000 Armenians fell victim of Turkish brutality."

*(To be continued)*



# ABOUT THE HAIRENIK MONTHLY AND THE POLITICAL SITUATION

By ARPAXAT SETRAKIAN

In 1947 the Hairenik Monthly, the foremost Armenian-language literary magazine in the world, wound up its 25th anniversary. Since then, the occasion has been used for nationwide celebrations particularly throughout the United States, coupled with a fund raising campaign for the purpose of promoting Armenian publications in the dispersion. As a result of these public observances, already a considerable sum has been assured under the name of Hairenik Cultural Fund, and the appearance of the English-language Armenian Review is the direct result of Hairenik's first efforts. Such a mass rally recently was held in New York.

Following is the text of the speech delivered by Arpaxat Setrakian, prominent California attorney and noted Armenian civic leader, at the New York rally held on May 9 last, at the Hotel New Yorker.



We are assembled here to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Hairenik Monthly, and to extend to the Hairenik Monthly our moral and material support. We are also here to do honor to a true patriot, Reuben Darbinian, who has carried the heavy burden of the Hairenik Association's publications with patience, wisdom and courage.

What caused the birth of the Hairenik Monthly? To answer this question correctly let us see what happened in 1890. In 1890 a small group of liberty-loving Armenians laid the foundation of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

The seeds of liberty began to germinate. The A.R.F. became the Armenian temple of freedom. Within 30 years the A.R.F. and other Armenian political organizations gave birth to many revolutionary heroes, outstanding literary giants, such as Agnooni, Zohrab, Aharonian, Zartarian and others. These crusaders for liberty and justice wrote about some of the most brilliant episodes of heroism in the history of Armenia. Many of these crusaders fell on the road of duty. Some escaped death. Many of those

who did not perish were philosophers, poets, soldiers, historians, journalists, and revolutionists. They anxiously looked forward to the day when an Armenian publication, established upon the broad fundamentals of broadmindedness and tolerance, would publish their creative works. They wanted to hand down to future generations the heroic deeds of Armenian revolutionists who had laid down their lives for the sacred cause of Haiastan. They wanted to preserve Armenian Art and Culture.

The need for an Armenian publication to which these patriotic thinkers and writers could contribute was immediate and imperative. The A.R.F. accepted the challenge and the Hairenik Monthly was born in 1922. Reuben Darbinian, the uncompromising champion of the great principles of Democracy, became its Editor-in-Chief.

The Hairenik Monthly became an open forum. In this forum appeared a galaxy of Armenian geniuses. They were Dashnagtzagans, Ramgavars, Hunchagians and Independents. They were true Armenian servants. They worked together, pulled to-

gether and enabled the Hairenik Monthly to triumph along a road covered with almost insurmountable difficulties.

The Hairenik Monthly with unconquerable determination and then much sacrifice and suffering has served faithfully and loyally and has made available for future generations a reservoir of authentic knowl-

edge about Armenian social and cultural life.

Had the A.R.F. failed to accept the challenge, and the publication of the Hairenik Monthly not succeeded, Armenia would have been robbed of such spiritual riches which neither money nor effort could have ever replaced. For more than 25 years the Hairenik Monthly has enjoyed a very healthy and useful life. We must see to it that Hairenik Monthly's publication shall be carried on with assurance in the future. We need the Hairenik Monthly now more than ever.

For years, we hoped for a periodical published in English—an English periodical patterned after the Hairenik Monthly. A periodical which would acquaint our youth with the heroic role their forefathers had played in the moving drama of the past 2000 years. The Hairenik Association again accepted the challenge and the English-language Armenian Review came to life.

The two periodicals, the Hairenik Monthly and the Armenian Review, now have a magnificent opportunity to help us keep pace with these swiftly moving events. Both these periodicals will have to meet and deal with issues of great importance. The two most important issues which must be met and dealt with, wisely, sensibly, and courageously are the following.

1. *To bring about a better understanding between the members of the Armenian race and the Americans.*

2. *To defend and preserve the great principles of Democracy and our way of life.*

Let us consider the first issue. We, the members of the Armenian race, are truly misunderstood. The Armenian race is one of the noblest races in the history of mankind. Yet how little others know about us. How little others know about our art, our culture, our heroic revolutionists. Yes, and how little they know the part we have played during the past 2000 years in order to keep the fire of civilization burning high.



Arpaxat Setrakian

We have been too complacent, too indifferent. The time has come to tell others about Armenia and her glorious past. And at last, at long last we have the *Armenian Review* to do this most important job for us. As a race we have much to be proud for, and very little to be ashamed of. For, what race on earth has shed such rivers of blood in order to uphold the ideals, the ethics of Christian faith? For, what race on earth has sacrificed as much, suffered as much, in order to carry the torch of civilization, and preserve her national existence? Our heroes wrote some of the most brilliant and heroic pages in the history of freedom-loving peoples of the world. They fought against impossible odds. They perished in enemies' dungeons. They mounted gallows singing.

The time has come when scholars and historians may use the *Armenian Review* and acquaint the English-speaking world with the real Armenian character, with Armenian ideals, literary life, Armenian culture, art and beauty. The time has come to lift the great name of Armenia to the heights she so richly deserves.

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Let us now discuss the second issue. How to defend and preserve our way of life. These are serious and troublous times. The fate of our nation hangs in the balance. We must think and think hard about how to conduct ourselves. We must conduct ourselves in such a way that we may prove deserving of enjoying the blessings of our free institutions. This is no time for sentimentalism or emotionalism. This is the time for sober, serious and careful thinking and acting.

Within 20 years the world has suffered the most horrible turmoil of two world wars. During the first world war the peoples of the world were told that with victory would come peace, permanent peace. We know what happened. Hardly 20 years had passed

when the world was plunged into a second world war, more destructive, immeasurably more painful to humanity. During the second world war the peace-loving peoples of the world again were told that with the inevitable victory would come peace, permanent peace, and furthermore each nation would enjoy the right to choose its way of life. Moreover, no nation, no matter how big or how strong, would be able to impose her way of life upon another nation thru overt force or infiltration.

We know what has happened after World War II. Hardly had the shooting ceased when the cold war started. The world today is divided into two camps. On one side stands the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. On the other side stands the mightiest democratic union, the United States of America. America hates war, hates injustice and hates oppression. America was founded by those who rebelled against tyranny. America is a peace-loving nation. America does not seek one inch of territory. However, America remembers only too well what happened after World War I.

Because of the blind and short-sighted attitude of a handful of United States senators, our nation surrendered world leadership which had been secured thru the price of blood and tears and measureless sacrifice.

Today America is united. United as never before. Party barriers are lifted. Democrats and Republicans are resolved that the error of *surrendering* world leadership shall not happen again. U. S. Senator Vandenberg, the president of the U. S. Senate, fully represented not only the united thinking of the American Congress but also of the American people when he said, "I believe we either take or surrender leadership."

America has taken over the world leadership. America will keep the leadership. America will use the light of experience and, God willing, spare the world another war

which will result in the final conflagration of world civilization.

The skies of the freedom-loving peoples of the world are again covered with dark clouds of despair and terror. The freedom-loving peoples of the world are disturbed and concerned. Concerned because of the aggressive attitude of Russia. America has witnessed the aggressive and expansionist attitude of Russia with great alarm. The peoples of Albania, Serbia, Austria, Bulgaria, Roumania and Yugoslavia, Poland and other countries find themselves in one form or another under Soviet influence, and to a high measure under the control of Moscow. Czechoslovakia became sovietized only recently. Russia played a most shameful political role in that tragic drama.

Winston Churchill, the great statesman and crusader for world peace and security, said as early as April, 1947, "The Communist peril has been recognized as the gravest peril that now overhangs the world."

On March 12, 1947, President Truman appeared before the joint Congress and described our way of life in the following exact language: "Our way of life is based upon the will of majority, and it is distinguished by free institutions, representative governments, free elections, guaranteed individual liberties, freedom of speech and religion and freedom from political oppression."

President Truman describes the Russian way of life in the following exact language: "The other way of life is based upon the will of minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press, radio, fixed elections and suppression of personal freedom."

Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen, one of the world's most outstanding educators and spiritual leaders, describes our way of life in the following exact language:

1. "The right to own one's own business.
2. "The right not only to agree with a government policy but also the right to dis-

agree or dissent, either publicly or by secret ballot.

3. "The right of working men to unite in unions to protect their interests and to strike if need be.

4. "The right to freedom of the press and freedom of speech."

Monsignor Sheen, speaking of Soviet Russia's way of life, says, "These are democratic rights but the new Soviet Constitution does not grant a single one of these rights, it even prohibits them."

These are cold plain facts.

The United States of America is the home of freedom. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is the home of slavery and terror.

If the Russians are satisfied with the philosophy of Communism that is their business. All that we the people of America ask is that they leave us alone. All that we ask of Russia is to keep out of United States the twisted and distorted philosophy of Communism which preaches nothing but hate and class struggle.

The United States is determined to aid nations who do not choose to accept Communism. President Truman said on April 15th: "The United States must take a positive stand against aggression. We have seen it before, aggression by the strong against the weak—openly by use of armed forces and secretly by infiltration. We must take a positive stand. It is no longer enough merely to say we don't want war. We must act in time, ahead of time."

Sam Rayburn, outstanding legislator, said in the House of Representatives April 1947: "God help this world if we do not accept our responsibilities to help countries that do not want to be smothered by communism."

General Marshall, our Secretary of State, after his return from Moscow where he made every effort to establish peace in this world of ours, said: "We must not compromise on great principles in order to achieve agreement for agreement's sake."

What were the reasons that compelled

President Truman, the President of the U. S. Senate, Vandenberg, a Republican, Sam Rayburn, a renowned Democrat, Secretary Marshall, and thousands of others holding important and responsible state and federal positions to alter our foreign policy stand? Why did our leaders tear from its very roots America's traditional isolationism and criticize and condemn Russia and its political faith, in the strongest possible language?

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The answer is obvious. Because these men know that Communist Russia is out to sovietize not only Europe and Asia but this great land of ours if possible. Because these men know, that Communism, Fascism, Nazism spell just one thing—*Totalitarianism*. And they also know that *Totalitarianism* means nothing else but Dictatorship.

Because these men know that it was the curse of dictatorship and all the evils that go with it which compelled their patriotic forefathers to immigrate to this country and lay the foundation, "Of the land of the Free and the home of the Brave." Because any person who has the least knowledge as to what is going on politically knows that *Totalitarianism* aims and hopes to destroy the principles of the Declaration of Independence. Winston Churchill, some months past, described the Declaration of Independence in the following exact words: "All is here, nothing can be abandoned; nothing be added; nothing should be denied." The Declaration of Independence establishes the principles of our way of life in these words:

*That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*

In other words, in this country we enjoy the right to elect by secret ballot those whom we believe can serve us honestly and remove them from office if we decide that they are

not discharging their duties as they should. That is Democracy.

Of course there are many evils and imperfections in our economic and social life. They can only be corrected if you and I take more interest in the welfare of our country, if we become more community-minded and elect the kind of servants who do possess the desirable virtues of honesty, who believe in fair play and who will subordinate their own interests to the interests of their constituents.

Communists will use any and all means, no matter how false they may be, in order to stir up ill-feeling, line up one group against another, cause economic and social unrest, create hatred, class conflict and undermine the administrative branch of our government.

Dr. James Bonham, noted economist said in April, 1947: "Communists arouse and exploit every decisive possibility; Labor against Capital; Farmers against business men; Christians against Jews; Negroes against Whites; Foreign-born against native-born; South against North; unemployed against employed. That is why our way of life is diametrically opposed to the Russian way of life."

The freedom loving peoples of the world were shocked and stunned when Russia declared her opposition to the Marshall Plan. We all know what the Marshall Plan hopes and plans to accomplish. World War II reduced to ashes properties valued at countless billions of dollars. Many countries were devastated. Hundreds of millions of peoples were left homeless, hungry and in desperate condition.

Now anyone knows and must agree that peace and security cannot be achieved when people are hungry, cold, have hardly any clothes to wear and have no roof over their heads. For that very reason our Secretary of State, Marshall, developed the program which would enable European countries to receive American dollars, necessary material

to help their citizens to rebuild their homes and their factories. This program would help them rehabilitate themselves, get on their feet, become self-supporting, and once again be able to live like human beings.

Congress only recently approved Secretary Marshall's plan which is known as European Recovery Program. This program makes it possible for such European countries as have agreed to accept our aid, to receive more than 5000 millions of dollars in the next 12 months.

This is the greatest humanitarian gesture and practical effort ever attempted by any country in the history of mankind. Soviet Russia has refused to participate in this program. In addition, Russia has directed that none of her satellite nations be a party to this Recovery program.

Soviet Russia calls this most humanitarian move Imperialistic, Capitalistic and against the best interests of the peoples of the satellite nations. And Soviet Russia takes this stand while millions of hungry peoples in the Balkan States and other countries, controlled by Moscow, cry for something to eat, something to wear and some place to call home.

Some of you will rightfully ask why does Soviet Russia adopt such an unhumanitarian attitude? What possible objection can Soviet Russia have to a program which has only one objective—to help needy people to enjoy some small measure of economic comfort and establish peace and security?

The answer is clear.

Because Soviet Russia knows that Totalitarianism will not flourish in countries where economic conditions make it possible for people to enjoy the necessities of life. Because the disciples of the Communistic faith know that Communism can thrive only upon human misery, fear, and want.

My countrymen, we are fortunate that we live in this free country. The country which affords to everyone of us the same chance and the same opportunity. There

is not one privilege, that a native-born American enjoys which is denied to the man or woman who was born a citizen by adoption, except that of becoming President of the United States.

The difference of our way of life and the way of life of the Totalitarian countries can be best illustrated by the following example. When a member of the Hitler Youth took his oath of allegiance, he stood before a flag dipped in human blood and repeated, "In the presence of this blood flag which represents our Fuehrer, I swear to devote all my energies, all my strength to the saviour of our country."

When an American child swears allegiance he says, "I pledge allegiance to my flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

That is the difference.

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My friends, we the members of the Armenian race who know what it means to live in this country, and who have suffered fear, terror, persecution, intimidation, oppression, yes, bloodshed, should and must, more than anyone else value highly the blessings of the American free institutions which we enjoy so fully. We must tell our children, and our grandchildren, how fortunate they are to enjoy American citizenship. We must be loyal to our flag and to our country. We must at all times do everything in our power to uphold, defend and preserve the great principles of our way of life. These principles are free speech, free press, free worship, free assembly, individual liberties, freedom from fear and freedom from want.

There is no question, that the members of the Armenian race, as a whole, are not Communists and don't want any part of it. Of course, we have in our race—like in all other races—a few hot-headed opportunists who attempt to confuse the real issues and to mislead and bewilder others. We cannot



# ISRO OF PETAR

By ROUBEN

(Translated from the Armenian original  
by James G. Mandalian)



Isro of Petar is a typical character. He represents the Fedayi, or Haiduk, as he was called,—the Armenian Revolutionary volunteer fighter, the unknown, unsung hero who gave his all for the liberation of his kinsmen from Turkish and Tsarist tyrannies. In translating the story from the Armenian original, an attempt has been made to compensate the idiomatics with their English equivalents, without completely destroying the original Armenian dialectical flavor. Tr.



Near the City of Moush, on the slopes of Sassoun there was a little village called Petar. In that village there was a poor house, and in that house there was a 19 year old boy by the name of Isro. He could neither read nor write; he was a lad lost in rags; he herded sheep.

One day Turkish tax collectors invaded the village to seize everything they could lay hands on and to carry it away. They beat up the men folk, and dragged the young brides to the barnyards. The villagers were terror-stricken and fled for dear life.

Isro saw all this, staff in hand, and his dagger in his belt. He did not debate long, he drew his dagger and plunged it into the stomach of the leader, seized his gun; and after felling a number of tax collectors, he withdrew to the mountains.

From that day Isro became an outlaw, and the ravines and the gulches became his home.

But, Isro's soul was in his village. The village still harbored Murad Effendi, the Turk, the usurer who had seized the villagers' lands, and had reduced them to serfs. The villagers toiled, and Murad Ef-

fendi ate. Finally, one day the village braves thought this had gone far enough, and Manouk, Petik, Akho and Tato, after talking it over with Isro, raided Murad Effendi's home and put to the sword every living soul; and having piled up the corpses, they burned the mansion and reduced it to ashes. Petar was saved from its tyrant, but the incident attracted the government's attention.

The news traveled deep into the interior of Sassoun and reached the ears of the famous revolutionary fighter leaders, Gevork Chavoush, and Koryoun, Iso of Goms. "These kids of Petar are spoiling the soup, let's go and pin their ears back," they said to each other. They gathered their fighters, descended from their mountain hideouts, and having reached the outskirts of Petar, they summoned the fools of Petar.

"How dare you, without my orders, kill men, and burn the mansion over the bodies of children? I'll cut off your ears one by one, you damned bastards," Gevork shouted at them angrily.

"I'll knock off your heads, for one dog you dare incite the anger of the Osmanli

on us," added Iso of Goms, as he struck Isro with the butt of his rifle.

"May the milk you suckled from your mothers breast be accursed. I carry a dagger in my belt, and yet you tell me to be patient. They rape our young brides, and yet you tell me to be patient. Here's Murad, grinding down the peasants, and yet you tell me to be patient! I'll be damned if I'll take all this lying down," Isro roared under his blows.

Gevork was softened now; he smiled.

"Alright, what's done is done, from this day on you are my soldiers," he said, and rising to his feet, he headed straight for the mountains of Sassoun.

After that Isro became gentle as a lamb and joined the unit of Iso of Goms.

And in 1904 Isro became a Fedayi—a revolutionary fighter. The Binbashi of Keosi had come down with his regiments into Sassoun to wipe out Sassoun's hero Tufeg (Boukherik). The Turkish troops, supported by Kurdish tribes, had made a ring around Sassoun, from Shenik to Kebin-Antok, Kob and Dzovasar, while the braves of Sassoun gave them battle. Among the braves was Iso of Goms, and Isro of Petar was his aide. Wherever Iso fought, Isro was with him, an inseparable part of him and his mainstay. It was so in all battles.

Finally, Sassoun fell. Taking the road to Caucasus, the Fedayis withdrew. But Isro would not go with them. He parted here, repeating the words of Makar:

"No, I'll not leave this place. Here we saw wedding scenes, and here we witnessed funerals. Ill go join Uncle Makar."

When Gevork and Iso of Goms reached the Monastery of Akhtamar, they changed their mind. "We saw weddings in Taron, now let's return and see the burials," they thought, and returned to hell. Isro's joy knew no bounds. Iso of Goms who had broken his bones was back again. He went back to him and resumed his former post of aide. They had a tough time that year

—a year which seemed like a century. What adventures, what perils, what hair-breadth escapes! One day Iso of Goms said to Isro,

"The Turks in the Caucasus are making it hard for the Armenians, there's fighting. They need help. Do you want to come?"

The thing sounded logical to Isro. "An Armenian is an Armenian," he said thoughtfully, "if there's a fight there, let's go help them."

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This was the bloody Armeno-Tartar struggle which had been instigated by the Tsarist government. Iso was a horseman, and Isro was his inseparable companion. They had to carve a path for themselves, with sword and bullet, from Sharour to Daralagiaz, as far as Zangezour-Ghaban. Tarter heads were like cabbage to these tried and tested veterans. They struck and were struck. They gave the enemy no quarter nor asked for any quarter. It is no exaggeration to say that the fate of the Armeno-Tartar conflict was decided by these very Fedayis. Without Seydo there would have been no heroic defence of Sharour. Without the lions Avak and Hatchu, there would have been no Daralagiaz. Without Iso and Murad, no Zangezour or Ghaban. And without Isro of Petar, what did all these men amount to?

With the ending of the Armeno-Tartar conflict, the Caucasus was quieted down, and Isro, now without an occupation, became tired and restless. One day as I was going through the forest of Kizil Aghaj, suddenly Isro sprung up before me and said to me:

"The fight is over everywhere. I found out that you are in a tight spot here, so I went to my brother in Kars and got myself a horse, a rifle, and a round of cartridges. You are our chief and I am your servant. Command and it shall be obeyed."

"If that's the case," I said to him, "you'll join Manouk of Petar's company."

Isro was overjoyed and kissed my hand. Thereafter he fought with Manouk until the proclamation of the Ottoman Constitution in 1908. And since in the initial stages of the constitution there had been inaugurated a spirit of fraternization between the Armenians and the Turks in an effort to rejuvenate the newly-liberated fatherland, to show its good faith, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation disarmed its volunteer fighters, Fedayis. This left the Fedayis practically without an occupation. Thus, Akho became restless and exasperated, Manouk began to complain, and the warriors generally went through a period of individual tragedy. Isro alone did not share that tragedy. He used to say to his intimate friends:

"Listen pal, be done with the idea of Nationality, forget it. The nation does not want to fight, whereas we are fighters. We don't need each other. Let's look unto ourselves. We gave our all to our nation, including our lives. That was alright, the nation is ours, after all. Who cares if we haven't a penny in our pockets; who cares if we are without home or shelter? If you ask for bread, they give you a dog's portion; if you ask for water, they give you dish water. By Allah, it's a crime and a curse either to ask or to receive. It's plain as day. Twelve months of the year our lives belong to the nation, let one or two days be ours. Those two days are enough to fill our pockets and live like princes."

Unlike Akho, Isro had no expectations from either the organization or his buddies; so, he gave up his arms, took off his Fedayi's clothes, put on his rags, got hold of his shepherd's staff, and merrily called to his comrades: "I came into the world naked, and now I am penniless. I am going."

And stacking his belt with two loaves of black bread, Isro left the world of Taron.

Before the month was over, Isro was riding his horse. He wore a gaudy Shalvar (baggy trousers), his waist braced with a

winding felt sash of Lahor, and a thick, felt Aba (waistcoat) of Khoskher on his back. Two slick Turkish rifles and a Persian saddlebag hung from the saddle of his horse. "Sergey died in exile and left me his possessions," Isro would say.

He sold his horse and bought four oxen, he traded his felt sash for 40 sheep and goat, and gave the Persian saddlebag to his mother, saying, "Build up a mansion beside the ruins of Murad Effendi's home."

Then, turning to Kiro, he said, "you are not strong, you're a weakling, take this gun, my gift to you; from now on you'll be my bodyguard."

He took off his clothes, saying, "these will do for special occasions," put on peasant's clothes and made his vow, "As long as the world is vain, so help me, Isro will become a farmer."

During the six years of the Turkish Constitution, with the exception of one mysterious month, Isro's name was never heard although he himself was there. He had become a full-fledged farmer. He sowed the field and reaped the harvest, he eked out his living. He milked the cow and the sheep, and made his sour milk and butter. His house was always full of bounties, and Isro entertained many guests.

I took advantage of Isro's hospitality. One day I went to his house and presented myself, not as his former chief, but as plain "Sir." He gave me a royal reception. . . .

"Thank Almighty. He gives me everything. I don't need the charity of others. God have mercy on Sergey's soul for giving me this fresh start in life."

"But Sergey is not dead, he is alive, he is a porter in Istanbul," I corrected him.

Isro looked me straight in the eye, as he said,

"Sir, what do you want? Let Sergey cease being. Let him be Mergey or what you will. It was he who made it possible for me to be independent. It was he who prevented me from being a pauper. Don't worry.

When the storm hits us again, I'll be ready. My life a sacrifice unto you."

We understood each other. I kissed his forehead, and he kissed my hand. I believed him, and said:

"Whether it's Sergey or Mergey, let him go blind in both eyes. You are right."

We ate bread and drank wine in Isro's house.

And the storm came. It was 1914. The obscure, unknown Isro once again was before me:

"You are our chief, I am your servant. The storm has come. Now what can I do?"

"You know what you can do. You'll burn up your house, . . . a sacrifice to Sergey's and Mergey's soul. Pack up what you've got. You will be a soldier in Topal (lame) Manouk's company, you'll do whatever he tells you."

"I understand." . . . Saying it, he took his departure. And he became the aide of Manouk of Petar. After that, God knows what all he suffered together with Manouk and his company. In April of 1915, the days of the dread Turkish deportations, his company guarded the Kourtek Mountain which controlled all the roads to Sassoun, and was the sole defense of the City of Moush and his native Village of Petar. And not only Petar, but Brimok, Gartzor, Gomer, the Village of Hrayr, and all those who had put no trust in the assurances of the Prelate of Moush, and had ascended the mountain to defend themselves.

The two Manouks who guarded the front of Kertik had entrenched themselves on the icy tops of Kertik Douganeh, Zikvran, and Tirenkatar, having under their command Shenik, the inhabitants of Semal, the warriors of Shatakh, together with the flocks of sheep rounded up from the outlying valleys. Their stone breastworks confronted the Turkish trenches, a man's length deep, and fortified here and there with barbed wires, a thing hitherto unknown to our warriors, which terrified the natives of Sas-

soun more than Turkish guns or cannon. These trenches stretched like a huge belt, from Archglorik, overlooking the Fortress of Moushegh, as far as Satchka-Douran, while the Fortress of Astghik stood alone in the distance.

Within the confinement of the Turkish belt was the City of Moush with its 10-12 thousand Armenian population and a slightly greater number of Turks. Here was the headquarters of the Turkish army and government together with their Servet and Kiazim Pashas. Here, too, was the Armenian Prelacy and the only business center. But all these had been separated from us ever since April.

Neither of the two confronting lines could establish contact with the city. If a head popped up from the Turkish lines, the Armenian guards would make short shrift of him. And vice versa. This was so tiresome for both sides, particularly as it lagged along for months, causing many casualties on both sides. It was not so much the fear which was tiresome, but the constant tension which wrecked the nerves, and ran body and soul ragged. But not so with Isro who knew neither fatigue nor tension.

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It was June of 1915. Terrible and conflicting news came in from all corners. At first these news came from Khoulb, Khiank, Psank, where a life and death fight had been waged ever since the beginning of the year. The sinister news began to seep in from the City of Moush and the outlying plains which, thanks to the defenses of Kertik, hitherto was untouched. It was imperative, if possible, that the conflicting news from Moush be verified on the spot. In the evening we were in our positions at Kertik, our most advanced positions toward Moush being occupied by Isro's kozaks, scarcely 4 kilometers from the city. The city itself, being hidden by Archglorik, was not visible to Isro's vanguard. It was scarcely 2 kilo-

meters from the mountain, and only 200 meters from the Turkish front trenches.

As we timorously approached Isro's positions, Isro himself, merry and reckless as ever, ran to meet us, scornful of the Turkish trenches which were in plain sight.

"What kind of news do you bring us?" he asked.

"We want to know what kind of news you've got for us," I replied.

"Vallah, whether it's possible or not, the day of our salvation is here. The first day they increased the number of troops in front of our positions. They're jammed in their trenches, and yet, they're so quiet, they haven't attacked us. Today at noon we heard the sound of cannon, very deep rumblings, as if coming from the direction of Kosor Mountains. My guess is it's the Russians who, having advanced from the Poulanikhs, have entered the plain of Moush."

Our eyes were shining, and all faces became lit with smiles.

"You heard the rumbling of cannon?" we all asked.

We all were verily swimming in hope, except Sharo Manouk, who, shaking his head doubtfully, asked Isro: "What chance is there to sneak in the city and verify what you've heard?"

"There's only one chance, Hey, and that's to throw out the troops from yonder trenches and get into the city in the ensuing confusion."

Then, very quietly and very deliberately Manouk of Petar said: "Isro says well, but we need ammunition; the boys scarcely have 40-50 rounds each. For an attack of this kind, we need 100 rounds. To follow the retreating Turks and enter the city, one more thing is necessary."

"Manouk is right," Isro put in, "you can't make an attack with forty rounds. Now take this rifle, what is a rifle but a few pieces of wood put together. If that be so, to hell with the rifle and its cartridges. Give me 20 men with daggers and 20 with revolvers,

and I promise you I'll creep in those trenches before you can say Jack rabbit. If I succeed in chasing them out, the road to the city is clear. If I die, that will be your hard luck."

Then Khazar of Shenik and Topal Manouk took the floor.

"It's a crazy thing, but we are with you, one day more or less in a man's life makes no difference."

Whereupon, Sharo Manouk concluded:

"A promise is a promise. Now then, at midnight you enter the trenches. Whether you kick them out or not you stay there, dead or alive. When I hear the shots of your revolvers, I will come down from Tab, along the plain, and enter the valley of the city. I'll see what's doing. If we live, we will return."

At midnight there was a furious sputtering in the trenches, much like pouring salt on fire, which indicated that Isro, Khazar, and Manouk had broken into the trenches and Turkish troops were firing away. In less than half an hour, ghostlike men stalked through the night, without firing, and made their way from the heights into the plains. Sharo Manouk was keeping his word. At three o'clock all firing ceased, proving that our men had not been wiped out, and that the panicky Turks were fleeing. This was the signal for us to close in on the trenches with our remaining forces. The trenches were wiped clean. Isro, holding in his hand the rifle of a Turkish soldier, was joyfully calling to us,

"The dogs are gone."

At four o'clock, toward dawn, we heard the sound of a terrific fight in the plain. This was a bad sign. It meant that the Turks had intercepted Sharo Manouk. Isro wanted to join the fight but we needed him to guard the trenches. Finally Khazar made a dash for it and came back with the news that our men had been caught in a Turkish trap, with not a chance of advancing toward the city. The Turks were firing away from their

dominating position of Berd ward, the Fortress of Moushegh, and Satchku, while the city of Moush was in flames.

Toward noon the survivors of Moush joined us. The natives of Sassoun had taken prisoner the entire population of Tabeh. Manouk, now having become Sharo's rearguard, was fighting his way toward our positions.

"No, Isro, there's no Russian nor Moush; when we are dead the Russian will come."

Death stalked us all, particularly Isro who always stood before its sickle. It was with difficulty that they forced him out of his position in Kurtik into the plain of Shenik. We saw him in the fights of Aliantz, Antog, and Kebin, and by August we no longer had sufficient forces left to maintain any position. Isro became a hounded wolf in the mountains.

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It was 1916. The Turks had been defeated on all fronts and were retreating pell mell while the victorious Russians advanced.

"Sharo Manouk was right, the Russians let us get massacred, and now they come to the aid of our corpses," Isro said with bitterness, and he sulked at both the Russians and all those who served them.

In the ensuing rehabilitation, together with Manouk and Moushegh, Isro became an officer of the so-called Cities Union. "Let's gather the orphans, they're the stripplings of our future Armenia," he would say as little babies were rounded up for the orphanage. Orphans were reclaimed from among the ruins and from the Kurds with money or by force.

To Isro, the 1917 revolution was the collapse of the "Ouroose" (Russian) throne. He again girdled on his armour and mounted his horse. He was the aide of Manouk, and later of Moushegh, and took part in all the battles, all the way from Khenouse to Karakillisse and Zangezour. In 1918 Armenia became independent and every one was happy. Armenian parliament, Armenian government, and Armenian army! The people

shed tears of joy. Every one turned to his occupation, the plough and the hoe, the pen and eloquence. Only the mountaineers were disconsolate. Having gathered around Manouk, Moushegh, and other leaders, and with Isro, one day they came to see me.

"Isro, what is it you want to say?" I asked.

"Sir, you've got to find a remedy for us. If you don't, we'll find one even if we cause some headaches. As long as we have strangers among us, as long as there are Turks and Tartars in our country, there's no Armenia for us. We'll not recognize your government as long as our vow is unfulfilled."

They went away. The government looked upon them as outlaws but had no power to restrain them. They raised a force of 500 horsemen, a mob of several thousands, and an infantry. Like grasshoppers, they covered every nook and crevice of Armenia, weeded out the Turk, the Kurd, and the Tartar from the villages; they turned on the Turks the lessons they had learned from them, and turned over their loot to the starving. This illegal justice so heightened their charm that even those who declaimed in the name of the law sang their praises. This bloody journey took the lives of Manouk, Akho, and many many others.

The beginning of 1920 Isro again faced me. He said,

"Now Armenia has become Armenia, not a trace of a Turk. I've come to bid you farewell. I have selected a village like Petar on the flank of Alagiaz, I have a pair of oxen. Now I'm going to become a farmer."

From that day Isro became a peasant. To him, partisan controversies and fights were a thing unintelligible. During the May (Bolshevik) uprising, he reluctantly left his village and took up arms against the Russian. During the February insurrection, again he left the village, because, as he reasoned, the lads had "desecrated the holy ointment." When upon the sovietization of

Armenia, his buddies left Armenia, he would not desert his village and take the staff of the wanderer. Although I did not see him in those days, I know exactly what was going on in his mind:

"Why make such a fuss over the Bolshevik and the Menshevik? If they are Armenians, that's all that counts. There is the black and the white among the Armenians. We fought so hard, scarcely got hold of a piece of bread; why drop that morsel and go away? I became a bandit and a mauserist, so that my vow would be fulfilled and Armenia would be rid of the Turk. Now all that is done. Where can I go, if I leave the real Armenia? I will not say one thousand, I'll be conservative, did we, or did we not clean up at least 500 Turkish villages? I shall have no grudges if the Turks have my blood. Did we not turn all those villages over to the Armenians? Then I am like unction unto their foreheads. Surely those Armenians have not suckled the milk of a dog. I have the most children among these Armenians. I haven't kept track, but I must have given them at least 1,000 orphans whom I rescued with my own hand. Surely these were not the offspring of snakes, they are Armenians. What does it matter to me if they are Bolsheviks or Mensheviks? I'll just live by myself and eke out my bread from my patch of land."

This was the way this plain soldier reasoned and until 1933 he never came out of his village in Alagiaz where he busied himself with his sheep and oxen. Then came the fall of 1938. The snow fell on the top of Mount Alagiaz. Isro was without a job now and frequently went to the neighboring village to see the youth he had saved, to see how tall had grown those "striplings" which he had planted. He was accompanied by his comrade-in-arms, Adam, the son of Ter Katch of Kialeguzan who didn't know the meaning of the word "fear." He was accompanied also by Vardan of Arkhouv, an older Fedayi, and more experienced than

Isro. The old comrades were going to villages which they had purged of the Turks, to enjoy the hospitality of those "striplings" whom they had recovered with so much sacrifice and toil.

But there awaited them a satanic plot. The "striplings" whom they had saved regaled them with honey and butter which had been mixed with knockout drops. Then came Armenian chekists and slew Isro, slew Adam, and took wounded Vardan to Yerevan.

This is what I heard about my beloved Isro and Adam. If Vardan has come out alive from his hospital bed, let him correct the errors and complete the story.

Isro, my heart, I know you remembered me at the last moment, and surprised, said to me:

"You are my chief, I am your servant. I shall not grudge my blood to the Turk, or the Russian; but not to those Armenians for whose sake I gave my all, and for whom I brought such calamities on their enemies."

You will also say, somewhat surprised: "Why did this thing happen to me and our boys?" And your bewildered eyes will search mine for an answer, for justice.

Trial and justice are gone from my hands, my hair is gray, and perhaps like you, I too am on the black list, to be shot some day like a dog, Isro chan. My only answer to your question is this:

"The fault of pure Armenians is this that, they think, there are no Armenians who ever suckled a dog's breasts, or emerged from a snake's egg. That is wrong. You thought that, by wishing well and by doing good, you would be able to insure your safety. That too was wrong. So, let your bones, like the bread of the holy communion, be scattered in the villages which you purged of the Turk and made them pure Armenian. He who recognizes the sanctity is an Armenian; he who does not, is the offspring of a snake. He is an ingrate."

# BABYLONIAN ORIGINS OF THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE

(Tracing Armenian Ethnic Names in Assyro-  
Babylonian Cuneiform Texts)

By VARTOUHIE CALANTAR  
NALBANDIAN

*The Hai in Their Historic Land.*—Mention already been made of the country Haiasa<sup>1</sup> (Ha-ia-sa) by consensus of scholars placed in the Armenian highlands, more specifically in Upper Armenia, (Partzer Haik). It has been identified with Haiastan. According to Kretschmer<sup>2</sup> Haia-root of Haiasa is the same as the Haia- of Haiastan. As to the ending, -stan is a well known Iranian geographical suffix, while -sa is classified under the vague name "Asia Minor" or "Asianic." Forrer thinks it is Luvian<sup>3</sup>. Kretschmer thinks it may be Proto-Hittite in origin.<sup>4</sup> Believing as I do that Haiaseans belonged to the same stock as the Hattians, I am rather inclined to accept the second view.

HAIASA, frequently mentioned in Hittite inscriptions of the Second Empire as an important enemy on the Empire's eastern borders, first appears on the political horizon of Western Asia in a treaty between the great Hittite king Suppiluliuma (1395-1350 B.C.) and *Hukkanas*, ruler of Haiasa (J. Friedrich, Staatsverträge des Hattireiches, No. 2). Column IV of this text seems to

me not to belong to it, but to a previous treaty between the same Suppiluliuma and a former ruler of Haiasa *Marias* and his men, but I am not too sure of this. In any case this would not alter the picture, for *Marias* is mentioned earlier in the text as a predecessor of *Hukkanas* and due note has been taken of this. Haiasa's emergence in history occurs then roughly about the beginning of the 14th century B.C.

The Haiaseans were a great nation, or rather a great family of kindred peoples, organized in a semi-democratic confederation. Their country extended from a point north of Kharpūt or north of Diarbekir<sup>5</sup> to Bagrevand, Turk. Alaskert in Eastern Armenia. The capital of the country, the City of Haiasa, was situated somewhere in the eastern part of the land. An important province seems to have been Halimana, whose prince was chosen by the Haiaseans to represent the nation and make peace offers at the army headquarters of the Hittite conqueror Mursilis II<sup>6</sup>. A probable location for Halimana is suggested by the curious equation established through Assyro-Babylonian texts, according to which *Halman* is equal *Arman* (more about this in

<sup>1</sup> To be treated in a separate paper, with identifications of several place-names.

<sup>2</sup> Der Nationale Name der Armenier. Anzeiger, Wien, 1932.

<sup>3</sup> The Luvians were an Indo-European people related to the I. E. Hittites, living south of these in Asia Minor. They belonged to an older stratum.

<sup>4</sup> The Proto-Hittites or Hattians were the oldest autochthonous non-Indoeuropean population of Asia Minor.

<sup>5</sup> There is no consensus yet about the outlines of Haiasa. Placenames remain mostly unidentified. The subject needs considerable study.

<sup>6</sup> A. Goetze, Annalen des Mursilis, 11th year, l. 42 f., ll. 44 and 50 Ha-li-ma-na. Mursilis reigned 1356-1319 B. C.

Part 11, dealing with The Name Armen). A town *Aramana*, celebrated because of its association with the Armenian hero Vardan Mamikonian, is mentioned by the National historian Lazar of Pharp, together with an exact description of its location between Bagravand (Alashkert), Baseh (P'asin) and Tuaratsatap (Gosku)<sup>7</sup>. Here then was Halimana, the hometown of the Haiasean ambassador.

Another, more direct, pointer to Bagrevand as an important center, is the place name *Sapagurvanta*, mentioned by the Hittites<sup>8</sup>. Safrastian has made a happy identification of this placename with Bagravand or Bagrevant of historical Armenia, but is puzzled by the initial Sa- of Sapagurvanta. He thinks it may be the terminal syllable of the preceding word in the text. I also had recognized Bagravand in the name, and I think I have the key to the problem. I am sure that the initial Sa- of Sapagurvanta is the geographical suffix -sa frequently met with in Haiasean placenames: Haia-sa, Arib-sa, Jahressa, Piggainares-sa, etc. Only, in this case, it is used as a prefix (compare the Georgian place-name *Sa-Mtskhe* 'land of the Mesech'). This is another proof perhaps that the Haiasians were ethnically related to the Proto-Hittites. Prof. Ghapantsian of the University of Erivan has found traces of a prefixal language in the Armenian<sup>9</sup>. I wish to add the place-name *Sararat* (Sa+Ararat) to the few prefixal Armenian words collected by him. *Sararat*, mentioned by both Moise of Khorene (Venice 1865 pp. 300-1) and Faustus of Byzance (III, 10 quoted by Sandaljian I, 135) as the name of the mountain on which the Ark

rested, is no doubt formed by adding the prefix Sa- to the well-known name of Noah's mountain<sup>10</sup>. There are more Armenian and Western-Asiatic place-names beginning with Sa-that can be explained in this manner with truly sensational results.

\* \* \*

*The Country HAISE.*—Going back to our Hai and Haiaseans, we must note one more country whose name seems to be derived from the ethnic Hai. This is *Haise* (ehla) mentioned by Mursilis in the campaign accounts of his 9th year (Cf. Goetze, AM 1.52 uruHa-a-i-se-eh-la-an). *Haise* was situated in the western part of the Armenian highlands, somewhere near Engalawa (Roman Ingala, Turkish Agl) near the Hittite-Haiasa border. It must be the *Aise* of the Assyrians, mentioned by Tiglath Pileser I in his campaign against Kumani and Musri (Luck. I. p. 241). According to this text *Aise* was located in Musri, south of Kumani. It may be the modern *Haini* north of Diarbekir. The region Agl-Haini formed the *House of Anghe* of classical Armenia (Cf. Hubschmann, Altarm. Ortsnamen, p. 154). Engalawa is obviously the Armenian Anghe.

*Haise* also must be the district *Aais* whose patron god figures in the Urartian List of Deities (Sayce V, 11. 23, 65 d A-a-i-na-hu-e<sup>11</sup>). It is significant that while the god *Aias* (Sayce V, 1, 21.d A-i-a<sup>12</sup>), presumably the patron deity of the larger and more important (H) *aia*sa rates a wild ox as animal sacrifice in the Urartian Royal Regulations, *Aais*, the patron of the smaller locality, rates only 4 sheep.

Armenian and Hittite (Proto?) with appreciable success.

<sup>10</sup> Noah's mountain, by the way, was not the mountain called Ararat in historic times. *Sararat-Ararat*, the original Deluge-Mountain, was situated in the province of Gortouk (Corduene), of Armenia, whence name and tradition, or tradition only, must have been transferred to the Giant in Eastern Armenia. See about this Khorenatsi and Buzandatsi in the same places.

<sup>11</sup> Lehmann-Haupt, CICH, I, 18 reads A-a-i-ra-i-ni.

<sup>12</sup> Lehmann-Haupt reads Ua.

<sup>7</sup> Ghazar P'arpetsi. Publ. Ghukasian, Tiflis, 1907, p. 120. The passage reads: "and they came to a town called *Aramana*, in the province of Bagravand, adjacent to Basen and Tuaratsatap."

<sup>8</sup> Forrer, *Khayasa-Azzi in Caucasia*, fasc. 9, p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> As very little published in Erivan reaches this country my knowledge of Ghapantsian's work dates back to 1933, and was incomplete even then. I only know he has made a comparative study of

*Azzi, alias of Haiasa.*—In the Hittite chronicles Haiasa is called by turns Haiasa or *Azzi*, sometimes in a manner as to leave no doubt that absolutely the same country is meant by either name. This identity, now definitely established by Forrer (Cf. Forrer, *Caucasica*, 9 ff., and Goetze, *Kiz-zuwatna*, p. 40, Note) has received no explanation. Perhaps the occasional writing *Aazzi* for *Azzi* (AM 7th year 22) furnishes a clue to this puzzle: it suggests that *Aazzi* is the ethnic (H)aa, to which the typical Armenian ending -zi (tsi) meaning 'inhabitant of' has been added. In that case *Azzi* would have originally meant 'inhabitants of the land Haa', later acquiring a geographical meaning. *Azzi* should be considered, then, a variant, rather than an alias, of Haiasa. This is, of course, pure speculation, and is offered for what it is worth.

The slight variation between (H) aa and (H)ai observed in *Aa-zi* and (H)ai-asa is met with consistently in *Ha*-derived names in every place and period save the oldest in Sumer.

Thus, *Mat* (H)aa and *Mat* Ai; <sup>4</sup>Haaa, "Gottin des Reichthums" (Weidner, *Alt. Gotterlisten*, p. 81. Here we find even a third *a*), and <sup>14</sup>Ai, "Herrin der Lander, welche ist die Grouin Ai" (Strassm. No. 2); <sup>4</sup>Aa(is) and <sup>4</sup>Ai(as) of the Urardian List of Deities, etc., all through to the comparatively modern variants: Georgian *Ha*-(os) and Armenian *Hai*. Even the form *Haa*<sup>tu</sup> has its variant *Haa*<sup>ti</sup> (Strassm. No. 1300). All of this proves that the real root of the ethnic name *Hai* is *HA*.

\* \* \*

*AIA, AIA<sup>du</sup> aState of Urartu.*—Whatever the southern boundaries of the *Hai* in Hittite times in the 14th century B. C.,<sup>13</sup> we find them solidly entrenched around

<sup>13</sup> I cannot believe they were confined to the region north of Aratsani (Murad Su), still less, that they were essential by a "West Euphrates Valley" people.

Lake Van in Assyrian times. The mountainland of Armenia as a whole no more bears their name. It is called *Su'ra* (contracted form of *Su'ara*), *Nairi*, and *Biaina*<sup>14</sup> by the native rulers. It is called *Nairi* and *Urartu* by the Assyrians. But a large and powerful member of the new confederation of Urartu is the State *Aia*, *Aia<sup>du</sup>*, on the shores of the Lake Van.

Tiglath Pileser I (1108-1080 B.C.), in his southern campaign against the land of *Haria* (Southern Armenia, perhaps the Hurri land proper) which he undertook in the second year of his reign, mentions a mountain *Aia*. He says (Luck. I, p. 229): "I gathered together my chariots and my host, between the mountains Idni and *Aia*, a difficult region, I took the way. Among the high mountains, the tops of which were sharp as the point of a dagger<sup>15</sup>, and which were impassable for my chariots. I left the chariots idle, and traversed the steep mountains on foot." A little further he again mentions *Aia*: "Twenty-five cities of the land of *Haria*, which lay at the foot of the mountains of *Aia*, *Shuira*, etc.

*Mt. Aia* is mentioned also by Sargon II (724-705) (Luck. II, 152)<sup>16</sup>. Sargon's *Mt. Aia* is in Manna, but his description of the mountain is almost identical with Tiglath Pileser's description of *Mt. Aia* in *Haria*. In his Letter to the god Assur which contains a detailed account of his war with *Ursa I* of *Urartu*, he depicts *Mt. Uaus* (*Mt. Aia*) as "A great mountain which (lifts) its summit into the region of the clouds, in the midst of the heavens, where, since time's beginning, the seed of humankind has not

<sup>14</sup> In which the ethist *Ai* might be hidden.

<sup>15</sup> Sounds like Wilhelm Bachman's (Ber Z. Routenkarte Von Mossul nach Wan) description of *Bashkala*: "Here the Taurus, with its pointed, dented, snow-capped mountains, diverts its north-eastward course to the very shores of Lake Van, where with an abrupt, perpendicular fall, it creates a setting akin to our Norwegian fjords. Quoted from Levon Lisitsian's "Physiographic Armenia," *Arm. Quarterly*, I.

<sup>16</sup> Luckenbill has *Uans*.

passed, no . . . had found his way, to the top of which no bird that wings its way across the mountains had ever come, to . . . a mountain peak which stands up like the blade of a dagger etc." But perhaps there was more than one such mountain in Armenia.

From Sargon we also learn about the land *Aia*<sup>du</sup>. In the *Annals* of this great conqueror (Luck. II, p. 20) and more elaborately in his Letter to the god Assur mentioned above (Luck. II, p. 166) the country Aiadu emerges as one of the most important, beautiful and prosperous States of Urartu. Sargon tells us glowingly of "30 of its cities, which line the shore of the terrible sea<sup>17</sup>, at the foot of great mountains, and all stand out like boundary stones: Agishtuina, Kailania, its strong fortresses, erected among them, shining above mount Arsidu and mount Mahunna, like stars. Their foundation walls were visible to a height of 240 cubits; his warriors, his picked troops, powerful in battle bearing shield lances the defense of his land were stationed therein," etc.

A hint that at least a part of Haiasa lay somewhere around Lake Van had been already present in the Hittite annals. When Mursilis, in the 10th year of his reign, sets to invade and subdue the 'rebel' Haiasa, he proceeds from Ingalawa (Agl) to the fortress-city *Aribsa* of Haiasa (Azzi) which he finally reaches, lays siege to, and captures.

Now the Hittite king expressly states about Aribsa that "said Aribsa however is situated in the sea." The expression "in the sea" even suggests location on an island, and in fact Forrer thinks Aribsa was built on a promontory on the West Coast of Lake Van. If there ever was a doubt as to the identity of the sea, the above-quoted Sargon text should dispel it. Aribsa may be identical with *Arbu* mentioned by Sargon

in the same texts, immediately before Aiadu (*Annals*, Luck. II, 20. Letter Luck. II p. 165). *Arbu* was located in Armarili (Armanili?) the province or state adjoining Aiadu.

\* \* \*

*The Land AIA on the Black Sea.*—Finally I should mention the mythical land *Aia* (Aea) and its king *Aites* (Aetes) in Colchis-Aia, the land of the Golden Fleece, the glamorous goal of the celebrated Argonautic expedition. It is easy to list Aia as another member of the Hai-lands, or to identify it with *Haia*(sa), whose borders may have extended to the shores of the Black Sea. According to Greek legend fifty of Hellada's noblest and bravest heroes took part in the Argonautic expedition. They built a special ship, the *Argo*, embarked on it in Iolcus, Thessaly, sailed through the Aegean Sea, the Propontis and the Pontus Euxinus, and finally arrived at Aia in Colchis. One of the noble Greek heroes was *Armenos* from *Armenion*, a small town in Thessaly, who settled in Armenia and founded the Armenian nation. This seems a simple, straightforward report telling of the coming of the Greek Indo-European Armenians into the land of the non-I.E. native Hai. But in fact it is a very confusing story.<sup>18</sup> First, Armenians, supposed to be *Phrygians*, are represented here as *Thessalians* (Kretschmer has endeavored to explain this discrepancy in the Greek traditions in his *Einleitung in die Griechische Sprache*, but of this, later). Second, and this is most curious, the leader of the Argonautic expedition to Aia himself bears a typical, shall we call it *Haiasean* name, *Iason*. And this is not an accident—his father, king of Iolcus in Thessaly, is called *Aeson*. Their native land, moreover is *Achia* Phthiotis, the cradle of the *Achaian* race. This is not a linguistic study of the Achaian ethnics, but I would like to add

<sup>17</sup> Thureau Dangin has '*ondoyante*' (wavy). He has first published and translated the text. Cf. "Une Relation de la huitième Campagne de Sargon (714 avant J. C.) Paris.

<sup>18</sup> What I have given here is a composite story, combining several Greek traditions.

that the greatest son of Achaia Phiotis, *Achilles*, was son of *Aiacus*.

Now it is impossible to miss the similarity between Greek *Aes-*, *Ias-* and Armen. *Haise*, *Haiasa*, between Armen. *Haic* and Greek *Aiacus*, *Achaikos*, between Babylonian *Aha* and Greek *Acha*(ian). Nor is it possible to explain it with the simplest theory that Jason and Armenos brought the Achaian ethnics with them to the lands south of the Black Sea. For HA.A, A.HA, (H)AIA, etc., attested in the earliest Babylonian records, had reached Armenia centuries, millenniums before the Greek Jason and his companions did—brought there, not on the Argo but on the Ark.

The Greek legend, however, and the fact that Hai-names are at home in Eastern Greece, indicate an underlying unity in the

population of Western Asia and Eastern Greece. And indeed excavations conducted in Babylonia, Armenia, Asia Minor, Syria, and Eastern Greece show that Mediterranean longheads constituted the basic population in all these countries. Cultural remains also show the uniformity of what Menghin has named the "Tauric Culture" (after the Armenian *Taurus* mountains), which embraced Ur and Eridu, Haa-ki's neighbors in Babylonia, Armenia, and Eastern Greece. We may be sure, therefore, that when we propose an *Achaian-Hai* equation, it is not with mere assonance we are dealing.

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In our next article we shall deal with the name ARMEN.



Bull with Arms, found at Van, and dating from the days of Urartu. It is now in the possession of the British Museum.

# MITCHO

By HAMASDEGH

That year there was a plague among the animals; the oxen fell under their yokes, cattle did not return from herding. That year also died Lolig Ovan, no one knew from what cause.

When Lolig Ovan passed away, he left behind him an old house, a fine cigarette holder made of cherry-wood, a wife, a striped cow, and a fourteen year old son, Mitcho.

Soon after his father's death, Mitcho became the bad boy of our village. In the summer he used to drift about half-naked in dirty, torn rags. In the winter, he would roam in his father's old overcoat, which was made over to fit him.

"Ach, Mitcho, Mitcho!" his mother wailed. "Where are you, cursed Mitcho? The cow is gnawing her hoofs in the empty manger. Would you were in her place hungry and biting off your toes. Mitcho, Mitcho!"

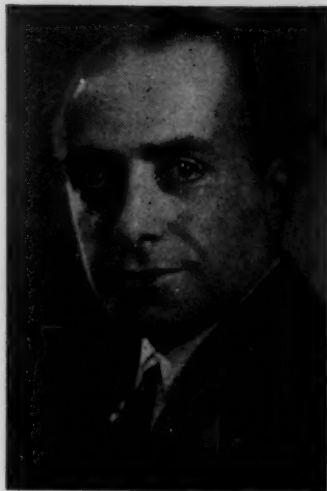
Mitcho had brought the cow home too early. He had tied her by the empty manger and had gone off to the house-top to throw stones at the sparrows that were perched on the chimney. He heard his mother's cursing voice rise from the house as the smoke rose from the chimney. Tired of stoning the birds, Mitcho came down, and once more followed the hungry cow to the meadows; whistling as the cow swished her tail on her lean rumps.

In the spring Mitcho was like Pan in the fields, except that he lacked cloven feet. The travellers passing on the ledge of Saint Sarkis Mountain would see Mitcho sitting below in the shadow of the cow, torturing the carcass of a crow as though it were still

alive; or they would see him basking in the sun, pulling a helpless rabbit by the ears.

In the evening when the home-coming farmers were unyoking their oxen, Mitcho would appear riding on the cow's back, swinging his big sun-burnt feet. For the day's mischief, he had a dead magpie dangling from the end of a long willow-stick on his shoulder. Around him gathered boys of his age, who had come from church or the barns.

"Mitcho, give us an owlhoot, will you?", one of them asked. Mitcho would sit on his haunches beneath the wall, set himself in the pose of an owl, open his eyes wide and



**Hamasdegh**

Born Hampartzoum Celenian, foremost contemporary Armenian short story writer.

toot like a moon-gazing owl. The boys marvelled at his skill.

"How does a donkey bray, Mitcho?" another would beg. Mitcho would bend his body into a quadruped, raise his head up and bray like a donkey: "Ye-he, ye-hah." Then Mitcho would lie down and do the various movements of the birds, while the boys would be thrilled with these impersonations. Meanwhile the cow, which had learned to be patient, would be chasing away the flies with her tail, licking her back, and waiting for the end of the performance.

And meanwhile his mother was wailing: "Mitcho, Mitcho, useless Mitcho, would that you were dead and buried. Where are you? People have come from church, it's already sun-down. Where did you leave the cow? Am I to wait till mid-night to milk her?" she cried, going from street to street, into the terraces and barnyards, calling for her son. Mitcho, hearing his mother from the distance, quickly made away.

He did not go home that night. When it was already midnight, while the villagers were sound asleep on their houseroofs, with the stars hanging overhead, Mitcho leaped into Mardo's yard, and there, stretching himself on a heap of soft straw, fell asleep.

\* \* \*

Klink-klink-klink. It was the sound of the millstone. In the front of the mill, Navo was busy grinding. He started back when he heard a sudden thump. It was Mitcho, who had jumped over the fence.

"Is that you, Mitcho? God bless you," greeted the miller, wondering what was on Mitcho's mind. "I thought it was the fox stealing away. . . . Sit down and watch me grind the stone. You must learn it too, now that your father. . . . See now, like that. You know Mitcho, your father was a great friend of mine." The miller again became absorbed in his work. Klink-klink-klink. . . .

The following day at dawn the old miller was knocking at the door of Mitcho's mother: "Hey, Sarig."

"What's up, Uncle Navo?"

"Yesterday, that good-for-nothing boy of yours stole my tobacco pouch and pipe. Sarig, that good pipe has served me for these 20 long years. You know I couldn't live without it. He came and sat by me, and I showed him how to grind the millstone so he could learn. And then all of a sudden, when I lifted my eyes, Mitcho and my pipe were gone. How was I to reckon he'd do anything like that. His father was an honest man. . . . So kind a man. . . ."

The dumbfounded mother began her oaths: "Ach, Mitcho, Mitcho, would it were time to dig your grave. . . . Would I had never borne you."

"Don't take it to heart so much, Sarig? After all, he's only a boy."

"What else can I do. Uncle Navo? This is not the first time. Only yesterday that Shiney-head Lukas came yelping about him. You know, Lukas hadn't crossed my threshold since my man died. He came yelling at me: 'Hey, Sarig!' You should have seen the ugly look in his face, Uncle Navo. 'Where is that Mitch', he says, his bald head red with anger. He finally let out that early in the morning, before the cock's crow, Mitcho had gone up to Saint Sarkis Mountain, and stole his fox-trap. What can I do, Uncle Navo? Mitcho doesn't even come home nights. You should have seen the way he threw a stone at me the other day? It just missed me." It wasn't only Lukas who had come to complain. Nor was Navo the last. Not a single day passed by without someone knocking at the door, calling, "Hey Sarig." The farmers would come and ask for Mitcho whenever they saw animal tracks in their newly sowed fields. Mother Hatoun would knock at Sarig's door whenever she found her chicken limping with broken legs. Hardly had Navo turned the corner when mother Manan burst into the house, "Sarig, where is that rogue son of yours?"

"What is it, sister Manan?"

"Woman, that son of yours broke the new

bride's pitcher while she was carrying water from the spring. It was a brand new pitcher, too. She was half way home with it when he shattered it with a stone. The poor bride came home soaking wet. How can you be proud of having a son like that?"

"No, Sister Manan, I am not proud of having a son. I have no son," she wept. "I wish this roof fell over my head that I may not live such days. Ach, Mitcho, Mitcho, why didn't my breast go dry instead of feeding you? What have I sinned, Good Lord, that you should will me this disgrace? Ach, Mitcho, would you were six feet under ground! Ach, ach, wretched Mitcho," she whimpered.

"You mustn't take it so much to heart, Sarig. He is young. He will change yet. When school opens in the fall, send him there so he can get an education and sing in the church choir," said Sister Manan to comfort her. Lolig Ovan, when living, had tried hard to send his son to school. He said to his wife one day: "Sarig, it is up to us; we must spare nothing for our boy's education. We are to blame if he turns out to be an ignorant drover."

Since her husband's death, every September when the school opened, Sarig, had in vain, tried to send Mitcho to school. He would not go. Now the birds with bright painted feathers had taken flight to warmer climes. Work in the fields had come to an end. It was autumn again. On Sunday evening Sarig heard from the church choir the voice of a new singer: After service, she saw a strange man standing by the church door. He wore natty, city clothes and donned a high hat. He was an elderly man with stooped shoulders. Tobacco had added a yellowish tint to his moustache. He was in conversation with one of the church elders. No doubt, Sarig thought, he was the new teacher.

The next day Sarig got up earlier than was her custom, even before the break of dawn. She looked out from her window into

the still dark down and recognized the silhouette of Brother Michael and his donkey loaded with cotton bales. He was on his way to the city, muttering his prayers. Sarig called out to him: "Brother Michael, may God bless your soul, won't you bring me a primer from the city with this money."

\* \* \*

That night, when Mitcho and his cow returned home, his mother presented him the primer, asking that next day, instead of taking the cow to the pasture, he should go to church and then to school. Then she busied herself weaving Mitcho's little mat, which he was to use as a cushion to sit on in school. Tonight, she spoke to him in the kindest way, promising him many good things. She showed no end of affection, hopeful that thereby he would yield to her wish.

Meanwhile, Mitcho examined the primer book. It was a brand new one, with green covers. He sat under the light, and with his legs crossed, turned the pages. Near him was the newly born calf, lying down in the same position as Mitcho. The calf also stared at the primer, and understood it as much as Mitcho.

The cover of the book was embossed with the picture of Saint Mesrop, who had devised the Armenian alphabet. It showed the saint holding his right hand on his chest, his large eyes looking toward heaven, exhorting enlightenment. On the first page Mitcho found a cross, but that did not interest him. He kept thumbing the leaves. Then what do you suppose he saw but a trap like the one Shiney Lukas had. The picture of the trap aroused his interest. He turned more pages and there—sure enough—was a cluck hen roosting over her brood of tiny chicks, like Mother Hatoun's. This primer opened up a new world to Mitcho. Here were pictures of birds' nests, jack rabbits, and Ted's shephard dog, 'Komo'. He fell in love with the book. He went through it several times, when finally it dropped from

his hand as he drowsed into sleep. In his dream Mitcho saw the green covers of the primer open out like wings and flutter away into the field. He and his cow watched the primer fly up to the church and there rest on the church steeple.

Mitcho arose early next morning. He put on his Sunday clothes, had his mat and his primer under his arm, and went to church. He stood along with the other boys but did not put down his possessions. He didn't even think of removing his cap, and failed to cross himself. He soon got to talk in a loud voice to his neighbor, Manuel, telling him that Shiney Lukas' trap was in his primer. The other boys wondered at Mitcho's bold manners, and placed their hands on their mouths to repress laughing. As soon as they came out of the church, the boys hurried to school, taunting Mitcho on the way. In the school room, Mitcho placed his mat next to Manuel's and sat on it. But no sooner done than the Sexton's son ran up to him, "Hey you Mitcho, get out of my place." Mitcho made no sign of moving, but instead was about to strike the other with his fist when the master suddenly arrived and ordered silence. The Sexton's son walked over to the master. "Mitcho took my seat," he said.

"Who is Mitcho?" inquired the master.

"He is Lolig Ovan's son." The master had not heard of the name. Looking about the room, his eyes were drawn to a new face near the post. It was Mitcho, talking loudly and showing the pictures in his primer to the boy sitting next to him.

"Come here, lad," the master ordered. Mitcho had to be nudged by the pupil next to him for he was absorbed in his book. As he rose to go, he felt his mat following him. The pupils laughed, and this made Mitcho angry.

"Who did that," the master asked, referring to the mat.

"Hunchback Magar," said one.

"Rise, Magar."

A sickly looking boy with watery green eyes stood up.

"Stretch out the palm of your right hand."

Magar opened his hand trembling. The master lashed him twice on the palm of his hand. Then turning to Mitcho, he asked: "What is your name?"

"Mitcho," shouted the boy. The others snickered.

"Silence," bellowed the master sternly. Then he turned to Mitcho again and asked: "What is your surname?"

"Mitcho, Mitcho!" repeated Mitcho more loudly.

"Ovanian," spoke someone for Mitcho.

"Who was that?" threatened the master.

"Garbo," volunteered another.

"Garbo may rise!"

A fat, chubby-faced boy stood up.

"Open your hand. I did not ask you for his name." Giving him two blows with the rattan, he turned to Mitcho again.

"I mean, whose son are you? What is your father's name?"

"Lolig Ovan," answered Mitcho.

"Good. Now open your primer, Mitcho."

Mitcho wet his thumb and opened the page containing a picture of a trap that resembled Shiney Lukas's.

"No, not that page. Start at the beginning."

Mitcho was bewildered. He wondered why this page was not as good as the first. He thought the master was being mean to him. But the teacher himself turned to the first page.

"Now repeat after me, A," the master began, walking up and down the side of the classroom.

"A," said Mitcho, putting his finger on the first letter.

"B," said the master's voice from the rear.

"B."

Mitcho repeated the alphabet mechanically after the teacher, trying to catch his face as though the letters were there.

"You must look into your primer, Mitcho," he said.

Mitcho followed the master pacing back and forth with the primer in his hand. The teacher could not help smiling at the boy's sense of mimicry. When however, Mitcho repeated the last letter his finger was still in the middle of the alphabet.

"Very good. Come and sit in this corner," the teacher invited. "I see that you are quite a young man, but you do not know the alphabet."

The seat assigned to him was opposite that of Hunchback Magar. Mitcho took his mat and sat on it. Hardly a minute passed when a pupil cried out, "Teacher, Mitcho hit me."

"Mitcho, rise!"

Mitcho rose.

"Open your right hand!" For the first time in his life and the first day in school Mitcho had received a beating.

The second day another pupil complained and still another.

"Master, Mitcho swiped my pen."

"Master, Mitcho swore at me."

On the third day Mitcho began to illustrate the margins of his primer. He drew pictures of birds that looked more like scissors. At noon, a ray of sunshine darted on his hand. It was fascinating to him, this ray of light that was like a living thing. He thought of the glorious sun that would now play about meadows. He was almost beside himself when a bird fluttered past the classroom window. He fell into a reverie; the beautiful autumn with the red and brown leaves tumbling down from the trees, screeching in a mass along the lanes in the wind, dancing and whirling under the bridge and floating over the brook. He mused that he and his cow were not taking any part in it this year. The walls of the classroom came closer and closer upon him. The master's face was inane and meaningless. How mean of people to confine him in such a place, he thought. And his cow, tied to a

rope in the stall. He knew that she too was uneasy, pining and lowing for the green pastures, the trees and the brook. He pictured her with her patient eyes lifted to the small opening on the roof in the barn through which fell a beam of light at a certain hour of the day yearning for the open and wide fields.

He made his mind up never to come to school after that day. Hunchback Magar was making faces at him, sticking his tongue out to tease Mitcho. This increased his hatred for school.

Two days had passed since Mitcho's disappearance. Some of the boys said they had seen him in a tree, pulling a bird's nest apart. Others claimed they saw him swimming in the creek. Mitcho had returned to play Pan in the fields. But alas, a few days later he was captured. His mother carried him to school on her back as otherwise Mitcho would prostrate himself on the ground and she could not drag him along. She dropped him before the master as though he were a sack. Mitcho's clothes were covered with cobwebs and splinters.

"Master," cried the mother, "May God give you strength that you may beat him into pulp. His flesh is yours, master. I found him in Mardo's barn. Don't show him any mercy, he's lost his primer. I cried my eyes out but what can I do? Ach, Mitcho, you've brought me grief. May your days end in grief!" But no sooner had she stopped when Mitcho leaped out of the schoolhouse and fled away. The poor woman, exhausted, her voice broken, turned her weary feet home.

That night she waited in vain for Mitcho. The efforts of the teacher to have him return were without success. That winter, Mitcho's antics were not very mischievous. He killed only one cat and tagged stray dogs with fancy names. He also took away Shiney Lukas's trap with a fox in it.

He spent his nights in Mardo's barn where there was a separate enclosure. In

the winter the beggars were allowed to quarter in this place so that they would not freeze to death in the cold. Mitcho met many beggars here, some of whom were blind and sang many strange songs. Others there were cripples and hunchbacks, who would tell of their love affairs. Still others had tambourines and played and danced at night. Now they were not the same poor and miserable beggars of the daytime. Among these ragged and transient knights, Mitcho liked best the blind teller of fairy tales. When it was time to sleep, Mitcho stretched himself on the old saddle of the donkey and slept next to his friend who had only his bread sack to serve him as a pillow.

"Mitcho, are you awake?" the blind beggar would call.

"Ye-es."

"Did the cocks crow?" Mitcho would not wake up until his friend promised, "Get up, Mitcho, this time I'm going to tell you about the Flying Horse."

Quickly Mitcho would be all eyes and ears. Everything the beggar told was real to him.

The blind beggar began: "Once upon a time there was a king . . ."

\* \* \*

It was spring now. The waters of the fountains gushed out, the brooks overflowed. The trees were spreading their roots deeper in the soil and the seeds were burgeoning. Everything was alive. There was growth in every direction. The steers in the pastures dilated their nostrils, and scenting the tracks of the cows, held their heads up, grunting. Here Mitcho could be seen every morning, riding on the back of his cow over the bridge.

On a warm day while chasing a hoopoe, Mitcho skipped into uncle Sookig's garden. As he followed the bird, he came near the house. The sight of mother Sookig bathing her young daughter made him forget the bird. On the impulse, he hid himself behind

a tree and secretly watched the girl. She was about his own age, standing there naked and her knees bent. The mother was pouring water over her head, combing her long wet hair down her back.

Mitcho was the prince of the fields, but in all nature there was nothing which had startled him as Lucig standing in her nude body. Now all thought of cow or the bird vanished from his mind. He came out of his hiding place. Lucig and her mother saw Mitcho leaning on a tree not far from the open door. He was staring at them in silence, without a stir, as though he were part of the tree.

"Hey, Mitcho, what are you doing here?" scolded the mother.

Mitcho could not speak. Lucig, abashed, had drawn her shoulders together as from a cold draught of the wind. The mother was stunned in seeing the flame that was burning in the lad's eyes at the sight of the girl's body. "Go away, Mitcho!" she threatened him. "Go away, quick!" Mitcho could not speak, could not move. He was spell-bound.

"Go away, I say!" The mother ran after him with a stick in her hand. But Mitcho made one bounce and with a leap he was gone. The sight of Mitcho in the garden was like a fairy to Lucig.

The next morning Mitcho led his cow by way of Uncle Sookig's garden. He jumped in from the fence, leaving the cow standing on the road. He saw uncle Sookig digging in the garden. Near him was a potato bag, and Lucig who was giving a hand.

"Well, to be sure, it's Mitcho. How come this way, Mitcho? Come on, then, help Lucig plant the potatoes. We'll soon be through," said uncle Sookig.

Mitcho stood close to Lucig. They looked at each other and blushed.

"Watch the way Lucig does it, Mitcho, and you do it the same way." Mitcho took the seedy pieces of potatoes and stuck them in the holes in the ground, but he could not keep his eyes away from Lucig.

With her bare feet and limbs, Lucig stood on the ground like a sunflower. Butterflies fluttered around her, trying to set on her bright colored skirt, on her shoulders and loose tresses.

Mitcho noticed in Lucig all the vividness of the fields, sunrise and sunset. He found in her something of the dove, the fox, the rabbit, and even of the sky. Her eyes were large and beautiful, just like a calf's, and in them was the peace and unrest of the fields.

There was more music in her voice than in the wings of the doves passing over their heads. Her fine dark brows against her white forehead were striking as a crow's lustrous feather fallen on snow. There was a strange feeling in Mitcho's soul every time his hand touched Lucig's as they planted the potatoes.

Mitcho had seen girls like Lucig only in the stories of the beggar friend. His unrest was like that of the grain which has been scorched by the sun. Lucig was like the sun to Mitcho.

He no longer followed his cow to the fields. Every day he drove her in the direction of uncle Sookig's farm, and there on a dry patch of ground he would leave her and run into the garden. The cow knew that Mitcho no longer cared for her. She could find nothing to eat. She suffered from thirst, but Mitcho did not care. She remembered the days when she and Mitcho would lie in the shade of the willow-tree, Mitcho resting his head on her flank. Now she mooed in vain for him to come. He was hiding in the branches in the garden, watching and peering out every time when a bird fluttered or the wind moved. He waited until Lucig came out into the garden, her hair flapping in the breeze.

"Lucig," whispered Mitcho with heart-beat. "Lucig," he called to her again as she came out into view from the brushwood. "Are there any more potatoes to plant?"

Without answering, Lucig fluttered away

in the wind and became lost in another part of the garden.

Mitcho's ambition was now to be uncle Sookig's hired man, and to work for him all day long, to dig the earth, plant potatoes, to tend to everything. And for all that labor he would ask nothing, not even a measure of wheat. If he could only be close to Lucig, and become a brother to her!

Another time Mitcho came out of the leaves as Lucig passed by. He held a live owl in his hand.

"Lucig, Lucig!" he called. She was curious to see the bird and she came closer to him to look at it.

"Why did you catch the poor owl, Mitcho? You must let him free." He was proud now that she spoke to him. He began to tell her the fairy tale he once heard from his beggar friend about the old woman who rode in the air on a broom-stick, and how by looking in the owl's eyes she could tell fortune, and the hour of the day.

They were sitting together, when all of a sudden, Lucig's mother, seeing them, came out running angrily after them. Mitcho made away. The mother chided Lucig: "What are you doing here, Lucig? My mouth dried calling out after you. How many times must I tell you not to speak to that thief Mitcho? I'll strangle him once I get my hands on him. Go in the house now, and do those dishes right away."

From that day on, Lucig would no longer see Mitcho. Her mother had called him a thief, and she would be punished if she were found with him again.

Spring went by, summer and winter rolled on. But Mitcho never lost opportunity to go to uncle Sookig's garden. He would drive the cow out of the barn and leave her somewhere on the road, and then he would go and hide himself in the foliage waiting for Lucig to come out. Once, after waiting in vain to come in her sight, he learned that his cow had strayed. He trekked all over the fields but could find no trace of her. Could

it be that the cow got angry at him and went away to another herder? Or did someone steal her? he thought.

When Mitcho arrived home without the cow, his mother started to shower him with the usual curses: "Mitcho, Mitcho, may the plague take you!" She went around to her neighbors, tired and pitiable: "Don't blame me, sisters," she said, "it was the only cow we had. What will I do now? Whose door can a poor widow like me knock? . . . Ach, Mitcho, Mitcho, would that I had never borne you!"

The cold season was approaching. Uncle Sookig's family moved in town. Mitcho wandered over to uncle Sookig's deserted farm house and settled himself there. Then when the cold was too severe he moved into Mardo's barn where his beggar friend had already returned. He could not go home since the loss of the cow. His mother would have none of him.

That winter Mitcho helped Mardo's choremen around the barn. He took the oxen to the water trough and fed them with hay. At night, he lay listening to the fascinating tales of the beggar. "Once there was a king . . ."

"Brother Saco!" Mitcho would break in during the night, raising his head from the saddle of the donkey which served him as bed. The beggar at once became aware that Mitcho was no longer the happy lad he had come to know; there was sadness in his voice.

"What's ailing you?" he asked Mitcho.

"I can't sleep. Tell me another story."

"Now come, be a good boy and go to sleep. I promise you a hair-raiser of a story tomorrow."

"No use, brother Saco. I can't sleep."

Yes, he could not sleep for good reason, but he would not tell anyone of it, not even to his friend, the beggar Saco. He became silent with the silence of a mountain longing for the sky, with the silence of a cypress in love with the morning star.

"I wish you'd tell me another good story now. Maybe I can fall asleep then. Tonight seems so long."

The beggar turned his face to Mitcho and began, "Once upon a time there was a king. The king had a daughter . . . and . . ." And what followed was very real to Mitcho. . . . He imagined the king as uncle Sookig sitting with gorgeous robes on the throne in St. Sarkis Mountain, with his crown made of solid gold. And Lucig was the king's daughter. . . .

"Mitcho!"

"Yes, brother Saco."

"Are you awake?"

"Yes, I'm listening."

"One day the king's daughter went to the royal garden to see one of the servants. . . ."

Mitcho pictured Lucig in her golden gown coming to the garden to see him.

"Mitcho!" cried out the beggar.

"Yes, brother Saco."

"Who is standing near me?"

"No one. It's the little calf. Then what happened, brother Saco?"

The beggar went on, saying that the king's daughter finally married the servant, and their wedding lasted forty days and forty nights. . . .

Having come to the end of his tale, the beggar moved his head again, and feeling the bread sack with his hand, went to sleep. Mitcho kept awake. He kept staring at the snow covered window waiting for daybreak.

Mitcho often stole by uncle Sookig's house to peep in when it was night and the streets were quiet. Once he caught sight of Lucig sitting by her mother's side, rolling balls of thread. The mother was turning the spinning wheel while uncle Sookig was reading the Psalms and smoking his pipe. Then he saw Lucig serving her parents with a pitcher of water. She even came to the window, looked out and withdrew.

Mitcho held his breath watching every move in the household, specially Lucig. He

gazed on, unmindful of the cold. He waited there until the family said their prayers, until uncle Sookig took his coat off, and Lucig unbuttoned her dress. He went away after the lights in the house were put out.

That night Mitcho called on his friend the beggar for another story. His only comfort was now in fairy tales.

"You'd better go to sleep, Mitcho," said the beggar. "Tomorrow is Saint Sarkis Day, and we have to get up early."

The next day was also Sunday. The blind beggar had to go to the shrine at early dawn up in the Saint Sarkis Mountain. He too had his own affairs, particularly on a day like this. Tomorrow flocks of people from the various villages would come to offer sacrifices after three days' fasting. A holy day was a beggar's day for on such occasions the folks showed more pity and gave more freely. If only it did not snow or storm. But Saco's heart gave way to Mitcho's pleadings, and so he finally told another story, this time about Saint Sarkis himself. He described the horse of the saint in every detail. How on that night, the saint dashed across the mountains on his fiery steed, leaving the imprints of the horse's hoofs on the very rocks.

How since then every year, all the boys and girls fasted and on that day sacrificed doves in the shrine by the ledge, and prayed to the saint to make them more graceful and strong. And Saint Sarkis gave them everything they asked for.

The beggar had finished the story and fallen asleep. But an urgent question had come to Mitcho's mind, and he called out, "Brother Saco!"

"Uh ah!" the beggar yawned and turned on his side.

"Brother Saco, will Saint Sarkis make my wish come true too?"

"Sure he will! . . . Now go to sleep, Mitcho, it is late."

Though it was a cold Saint Sarkis Day, the sun was shining and the snow glittered

like silver dust. The young people had come from many villages, and their climb up the mountain was very colorful.

"Who is that fellow?" the climbers asked when they saw a lonely figure following them in the far distance.

"Maybe a beggar."

"No, it looks like a wolf," someone jested.

"Say, it's no wolf or beggar. That's Sarkig's son, Mitcho," said a girl. The youths kept joking about Mitcho, and one of them hinted:

"Let me tell you something, boys. That Mitcho is coming here to steal what he can from the shrine. You wait and see if he doesn't make away with the candles."

"Don't you worry," said another, "He won't come up this way. I bet he's set his mind on stealing Shiny Lukas's trap in the mountain."

Mitcho was ambling from behind, purposely holding himself in the distance for was it not true that he had not come to worship Saint Sarkis? And besides, his clothes were shabby, his hat greasy, his feet cold in old shoes lined with straw. How could he have the face to join those happy and well dressed boys and girls who looked so well cared for?

The crowd gathered in front of the shrine. Among them Mitcho saw a few beggar friends; there was the dove merchant, Torig, and the sexton who was selling candles. The pilgrims were buying candles and doves for sacrificial offerings. But Mitcho wished he could kneel down and strike his head on the doorstep of the shrine, to bleed himself in sacrifice and say his prayers and wishes. What if the others laughed at him, or made fun of his tattered clothes? But to have a dove, how wonderful that would be!

Mitcho decided to have a dove himself. He turned back to the village. He made the rounds about Torig's pigeon pen. Then he thought it would be best to wait until the

nightfall when the streets would be deserted, and Torig would be in the house with his wife.

At a late hour Torig's wife murmured to him: "Listen, man, I hear foot-steps on the roof."

"Who would dare to be out at this hour? It's the blizzard you're hearing," said the husband, as he went to sleep again. But a few minutes later the woman stirred her husband again: "Get up, man, go over to the pigeon shed. I heard something drop in there."

Sure enough, it was Mitcho in the pigeon house. He grabbed one of the best doves and tucked it under his coat, and made away to the ledge of the Saint Sarkis Mountain. He passed over the wooden bridge where he had trod many a time before with his cow. Climbing up on the slope of the mountain he could see nothing but the blizzard. "Who knows," he thought, "it might be Saint Sarkis himself coming on his winged steed." He thought he would perhaps even see the Saint.

The blizzard was like the froth and foam of the Saint's horse. But why was he in such haste? There was still another worshipper, who had come late. And this pilgrim had come all the way on foot, frozen almost in the cold, trying to get into the sanctuary to offer his gift. Mitcho too would be there soon with his gift and prayer. . . .

Early next morning, Shiney Lukas went to the Saint Sarkis Mountain to look over his traps. As he came near the ledge at the foot of the mountain he struck upon a lifeless body. It was Mitcho bundled up with his legs bent under him, his hair clinging to bars of icicle and his hands stiffly thrust out

pointing to the sky. He had been swamped by the snow-storm.

Lukas was stunned at the sight of the dead child. "O foolish boy," he cried, "if it was your wish to have traps, I could have given them to you. What silly notion came to your head to come to this . . . and only for a trap?" He hoisted the frozen body over his shoulder as he had done with many a dead fox and returned to the village. The body was getting heavier and heavier, and he finally placed it on an ox-cart.

It was still early. The smoke had not yet risen from the chimney-tops. The doors, frozen on their hinges, were just starting to creak. The early risers were coming out of their homes to shovel the snow away, and were making paths to go to church.

"What have you got there, Lukas?" asked one of the villagers. Shiny Lukas told them what had happened. Others came and gathered around the dead body inquiring as to how it happened. They all said something, for they all had their odds with Mitcho. They were silent and respectful to the dead child, and they forgave him for stealing their hens, stoning their windows and what not.

"And it was only last summer that he pulled down our fence. Poor Mitcho," said Lucig's mother, with pity in her voice.

At that very minute they heard the screams of a woman. It was Sarig, the mother, running to the scene, her hair disheveled, her face terror stricken. She swooned over her boy's body, embracing it as though she could bring him back to life.

"Mitcho, Mitcho, my only little cub, look at me, look at your mother! Wake up, my darling Mitcho! I will sell the house, everything. I will give everything away to buy you all the traps you want. Wake up, come to me. Mitcho, my darling Mitcho. . . ."



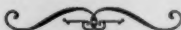
# TERRORS FROM THE CRIME OF 1915

By H. SARO

(Translated from the Armenian Hairenik  
Daily, January 11, 1948)



The atrocities of the Nazis during World War II have to a large extent relegated into oblivion the far more heinous and reprehensible brutalities which the Turks inflicted on the Armenians during World War I. Factually, the Turks set the first pattern of genocide which thirty years later was to be followed by Nazi Germany. The story of the Armenian genocide has been recorded by eminent authorities, based on the incontrovertible testimony of countless eye-witnesses, and later even confirmed by Turkish admission of guilt. The Armenian press itself has recorded numerous specific instances of Turkish diabolism and many a gruesome and blood-curdling tale. The following story, only recently recorded by the eye-witness himself, is a vivid portrayal of the fate of a small Armenian village, the heinousness and the diabolical nicety of which is all the more shocking when we consider how quickly the world forgot the tragedy of the Armenian, and the curious reversal of world opinion which has made the assassin Turk a nation whose friendship is courted, and on whom we are spending millions of American dollars.



*"Should this much crime  
Be forgotten by our sons,  
Accursed be the living  
Name Armenian."*

Avetis Aharonian.

During the first world war, when the Russian army was advancing from Datvan to Bitlis, a group of us Armenian horsemen who knew the region, having joined an advance guard of 300 Cossacks, were moving in the direction of Giuzel Dereh. In those days the only aim of every Armenian soldier was to find some living Armenian, to save him, and to take revenge on the Turk.

We were hurrying in the vain hope of finding some living Armenian. Finally we arrived at Giuzel Dereh which was known for its natural beauty, now wholly destroyed and desolate. There was not a sound, not a whisper, nor even the barking of a dog as an indication of life. The long series of partly-standing walls were without roofs or cover. Inside the houses, on the thresholds of the doors, on the streets, there lay

torn corpses, naked, swollen, and black . . .

A funereal silence enveloped the village. From cross marks inscribed on a stone embedded in a wall we discovered the church building, the door of which had been buried in the debris. When we ascended the broken wall, we were petrified at sight of the gruesome spectacle which confronted us. After centuries of oppression, persecution, and massacre, the Armenian people, the peasantry in particular, had turned into a sort of servility, blindly believing and impotent, relying on the Almighty God when in peril. At the exhortation of the priest, men and women, young and old, had filled the local church, kneeling, and piously praying. . . .  
"Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy on us, arise Lord God of the Armenians and save Thy people. Save, O Lord, the Armenian

people." For centuries that last refuge of the Armenian, his prayer, went unanswered. Whenever the Armenian Case came to the fore, God and the big civilized countries became identified with each other and both were silent.

The people of Giuzel Dereh, huddled in the church and hanging on the skirts of the Deity, young and old, while muttering their prayers, had been put to the sword indiscriminately. The corpses were piled high, one upon another, promiscuously, wrapped around one another, the blood turned black, congealed, . . . a veritable labyrinth of mangled, disfigured bodies. But the most incredible and shocking sight was the treatment which had been dealt to the village priest, a grotesque sight which instantly commanded our attention. The priest was hanged head down, his feet tied to the right and the left of the altar, his throat half-slit, his sexual organ having been cut off, was placed in his mouth. One was involuntarily forced to ponder that only the Ottoman Turk is capable of such a monstrosity, and only he can take satanic delight in such barbarism.

Both we and the Cossacks stood there petrified, tearless, and confused—in a stoney silence. In the distance, the voice of the soldier standing guard before our horses awakened us from our stupor. Holding his fur cap in his hand, he was frantically motioning to us—come forward. We scampered down the walls like madmen, whether from a desire to avoid the horrible sight, or from curiosity to see some new horror, we knew not. We moved to the left, each wondering if there were some Armenian to be saved, or if enemies were in sight.

What we saw in the distance looked like tombstones, sticking out in the air, but without a support, without reaching the ground. We looked attentively, our impatience lending wings to our vision. It was something incomprehensible. The commander of the Cossacks adjusted his field glasses and

looked, then, suddenly, he started on a gallop, the Cossacks and we following him, hot on his footsteps. When we arrived at the scene, we were shocked into a standstill, an extraordinary shiver piercing our bodies. This was the masterpiece of Turkish atrocity, of Turkish beastliness, and Turkish monstrosity. Years have passed since then, but even today, as I take my pen and try to describe the gruesome scene, my body is filled with goose pimples, from head to foot, and a chill wind, spreading slowly, rises and reaches my brain, constricting my throat with its suffocating breath.

Before their massacre in the village and the church, the Turks had selected and carried away all the beautiful young women, the young brides and the virgin girls, and had satiated their lust on these terrorized, helpless victims. In the center, piled on one another, were the naked bodies of these women, mangled and interlocked, all done to death with cold weapons; and around these corpses, like a ring, were rows of sharp stakes, each one meter long, firmly rooted in the ground, each bearing the naked body of a young woman or a girl who having been forced to sit on the sharp stake, had been impaled. The bellies of some were ripped lengthwise with a sharp sword, their entrails hanging out, the wombs of pregnant women were ripped, their luxurious long hair strewn over their bodies, or clinging to their bodies with clotted blood.

And as to the expression on their faces, it was a picture of infinite, unspeakable suffering, as if in writhing, which had been frozen. Not even the most skillful brushes in the world could paint that scene in its reality. Tightly squeezed teeth, half-closed slanting eyes, some swollen and burst, open mouths, grotesquely repulsive, and bulging closed eyes. It was as if they were ready to cry out, to shriek, but how, how can I tell it!

The Cossacks, like one man, took off their fur caps, and kneeling down, reverently and



# BLOOD AND RELIGION

By HAIK MARCAR

Haik Marcar, the first of our young people to make the Armenian Review with a short story, has had a varied and exciting experience. Born in Rangoon, Burma, he has practically traversed all parts of the world, Iran, Armenia, Turkey, India, and finally the United States. He received his education in India, with a thorough knowledge of the classical and modern Armenian, and almost completed his course at St. Xavier's College in Calcutta, India. He came to the United States with a scholarship from that institution, and at present is a senior at Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina. The present story is a chapter taken from a novel on life in India on which he is now working. His ambition is to get a Ph. D from Harvard.



It was one of those unusually hot afternoons of the month of August in 1946. The city of Calcutta was dead. DEATH and his brother FEAR roamed the streets, filled the air, and attacked homes.

Public offices, banks, stores and restaurants were closed indefinitely. Ferocious, fanatical, blood-thirsty men roamed the streets with murder in their hearts.

The subjugation of 300 years had precipitated religious and political hatred which burst with violence at the sound of freedom. The Raj (Britain) had declared that she would leave India in the hands and destiny of the Indian people within a year.

This news was too great, too good, too long-awaited and too much for a bunch of sheepish people who could not tell the difference between religion and politics, between cause and effect, and between day and night.

The city was divided into two camps—Hindu and Moslem. Each group was as cruel and as deadly as the other. Bricks, iron rods, and boiling water were the tools of their bloody riots. Houses were set on fire, children slaughtered, women raped and property looted or destroyed. Fear and death ruled the city. The mob was outrageous; they were thirsty for human blood, but the more they killed the more thirsty they became. With increasing thirst for blood, the appetite for murder and re-

venge grew bigger and bigger. The streets were full of butchered men, some with their heads chopped off, and others with a leg or hand missing.

Vultures soared down and sat on the dead bodies. They sat with outspread wings and sucked the warm human blood and then flew to another body, leaving the bloodless



*Haik Marcar*

corpses for the feast of the rats and black crows. The rats and crows, who were never at peace with each other, on that day shared their blessings and understanding and good will. They did not fight. There was plenty for all—vulture, crow and rat shared and shared alike. Each knew his limit. He ate what was his share.

The streets were empty except in places where fanatics looked for their preys. Such slogans as Jai Hind (victory for India), Pakistan Zendeabad (long live Pakistan) filled the air. Each threatened the other with a murder and a holy war. No man was safe. Every approaching moment was as dangerous and as deadly as the one before. Death marched triumphantly.

Stories of untold, unheard and incomprehensible crimes and atrocities flashed through the air. The air was filled with the smell of death and decay. Now one would hear that a Hindu temple was attacked by a company of Moslems, the holy vessels destroyed, gods and goddesses burnt and the priests murdered. In reprisal the Hindus had attacked a Mosque and set the place on fire together with the mollahs (priests).

\* \* \*

Chandra, a twenty-two-year-old Hindu student, was reading in the University's library. He looked down on the street from the library window. He saw the mad mob, wild with anger and as deadly as the king Cobra. He thought he would wait until dark and then go home. The danger was too great. He would not risk his life. He would like to stay in the library, sleep there and read for a few days until the storm calmed down. But his conscience hurt him. He had to safeguard the lives of his father and mother. His home was just three blocks away from the University. His father, for business convenience, had bought a house in the heart of the Moslem community. He was one of the very few Hindus

who lived in a house surrounded from all sides by Moslem neighbors. Of course, on normal days there was nothing to fear, but now that the two communities rose against each other with arms, life and property was at stake.

Fearful thoughts ran through Chandra's mind. He thought his home might have been burned and his parents slaughtered. He knelt and prayed to the gods Rama and Shiva for the safety of his folks. He also prayed for the sun to go down and the city to grow dark so that he might be able to reach home safely.

The sun went down and the majestic moon appeared on the opposite horizon. The city looked like a jungle. Blood-thirsty beasts in the form of men hunted only to kill and destroy. They carried burning torches that resembled the eyes of the royal bengal tiger in the Sundabans. The difference between the four-legged animals of the jungle and the two-legged animals of the city was that the former killed not his own kind and killed only when he was hungry. He killed to satisfy his hunger and he ate what he killed, whereas the latter killed his own kind, not for some need but solely in the name of religion, politics and other such empty words. Religion and politics—two high-sounding words that fire the passions of fools and have been the cause of many bloody wars.

It was midnight when Chandra decided that he could not stay in the library any longer. Outside in the streets the same confusion and bloodshed continued in an endless chain reaction. But now the mob was more stealthy and cautious.

Chandra could see under the bright moonlight people scurrying from corner to corner, pause for shelter, and emerge swiftly when they saw the coast was clear. He thought he would do the same. So he walked down from the library to the university grounds and ran fast to the nearest lonely palm tree. He stopped and gasped for breath. He

heard angry slogans. Then from the distance he saw the mob coming down the street in the shape of a dark, heavy storm cloud. He was a hundred yards away from the street and his house was three blocks away. He thought of making a dash for it but it seemed he might be stopped by someone on the way. He considered that it would be wise to wait until the mob passed by. He hid himself behind the trunk of the palm tree and kept staring in the direction of the approaching danger. He heard the same slogans again and again. At first he could not make out what the slogan was but as the mob approached, the tone became more clear, sharp, defiant and deadly. They were a few blocks away from the university when the slogan (Pakistan Zendeabad) his his ear drums like a deadly arrow. It hit and rebounded again and again, made fearful echoes in his ears. A shiver ran through his body. He was a Hindu. The approaching death was Moslem. He could see his shadow trembling in fear. It seemed that this was the end of him.

\* \* \*

The mob was approaching slower than Chandra thought. Time flew fast. He looked at his white shirt and thought of a plan. He pulled up the ends of his dothy (a piece of white cloth worn by the natives) and tucked them in his waist line so that his legs would be free for a swift dash. Then he took off his shirt and threw it on the ground. A packet of cigarettes and a box of matches fell off his shirt pocket. He was pale and nervous. The mob moved faster. Chandra picked up the cigarette and matches. With shivering hands he lighted one, put it in between his pale lips and threw away the rest of the packet. He never removed the cigarette from his quivering lips. He took short and quick puffs at it. He kept his eyes fixed on the crowd. He was so fascinated by the mob that he forgot to throw away the lighted match which he held unconsciously between the

fingers of his right hand. He was unaware of its danger until it burned his index finger, and his thumb. He wetted the blisters with the tip of his tongue to cool them off. But even his tongue was dry through excitement and fear. Then he rubbed his fingers on his clean-shaven head. He twisted the long queue of hair on the top of his skull round with his two fingers (only Hindus practice the custom of keeping a long queue of hair). He twisted and untwisted it a dozen times then, a fearful thought struck him like lightning. He held his hair with his fingers, raised it up and held it there while he thought to himself: "This little thread of hair might mean death. This will identify my Hindu faith to the advancing Moslems. I must cut it, I must do away with it." Then, he had a revulsion. "No, I can't deny my faith. I must live and die as a Hindu. Is life so dear that I should give up my religion?" Then a sensible thought came to him: "Life is not so dear but death is too near." So, with these incoherent thoughts, he decided to cut the traditional thread of hair which was the symbol of his faith. He had made up his mind. He would cut that piece of hair. But how? He had no pocket-knife and no razor blade. He was still taking quick puffs at his cigarette which had been reduced to a small butt, dangling between his lips only because his lips were dry and sticky. He was still trying to find a means of cutting his hair when he felt the heat of the cigarette on his dry lips. He removed it from his lips and was about to throw it away when he stopped and thought. He held the thread of hair between the fingers of his right hand and then, placing the lighted cigarette butt at the end of his hair close to the skull, he burned the ends and threw it on the ground. He did not notice that it fell on his shirt and started a small fire, attracting the attention of the approaching mob.

The mob reached the university grounds.

They had seen the flames of the burning shirt. The men surrounded the palm tree. They had evidently seen him. Their eyes were bloody and their clothes were smeared with blood. One who looked more wild and fanatical than the rest beat the fire out with his long lathee (a heavy stick).

Then he turned to Chandra, who was encircled by the crowd, and said, "Hooloo (idiot), pagla (crazy), don't be a low down cooly. What's the idea of setting the university on fire? Don't you know that both Moslems and Hindus benefit from it?"

Chandra was awe-stricken. His only answer to all the questions was "Gee ha (yes sir)."

The circle grew smaller as the more fanatical ones came closer and asked him questions as to how many Hindus he had killed. Some had begun telling their stories with pride and were boasting of their bravery when Jellal—apparently their leader—(the same man who had beat out the fire and reproached Chandra) stepped in the center of the crowd and said with an angry tone, "You fools! This is no time for a picnic. The Hindus are burning our mosques, raping our women, slaughtering our children, and burning our homes. Death to the Hindus! Jahanam jane dou (send them to hell). Aoo (come)."

He motioned with a wave of his hand. They moved. The air was once again filled with slogans. Death marched and fear flew before her.

Jellal, who had taken Chandra for a Moslem, handed him a long bamboo stick and said: "You take this. It will be very handy. Stick with me and don't spare any of the Hindu tramps. We must have more faithful and courageous Moslems like you. You see, we are fighting for our freedom. The freedom that was handed down to us by Akbar the Great. When the British leave, the Hindus will strip us of our national, political and religious freedom. That is the reason we have to fight for those high

ideals which to this day were preserved and cherished bravely by our fore-fathers, but today our freedom and high ideals are being threatened by Hindu domination of our sacred land; you understand, don't you?"

"Gee (yes)," Chandra repeated mechanically. He felt that he could not expose himself. It would mean death if he invited the slightest suspicion.

Jellal, whose blood-shot eyes and huge size inspired authority and terror on his followers, took hold of Chandra's hand and said: "Only today I have killed twelve Hindus and two Sikhs. Every Moslem must kill as many as he can. This is a holy war. We are now going to set a Hindu house on fire just one block away. I know that swine of a Hindu. He has a son who attends the University of Calcutta. If I get my hands on him I will roast him alive. No, I will skin him alive and leave his body to the vultures."

Chandra gave the usual answer, "Gee." He knew that Jellal's threat was directed to him although Jellal himself did not know it.

Jellal continued, "Loot all you can. Take all you can. Don't spare anyone."

There was a general confusion at the head of the crowd. He heard "Pakro sala co" (Catch the swine), "Marro sooar co (kill him)." Jellal left Chandra in the crowd and rushed to the scene of confusion. He stood in front of the crowd and shouted, "Khya hogia? (What's the matter?)"

Two men pushed a terrified skinny boy in front of Jellal. He stared at the boy and then motioned with his hand to beat the boy to death. The two men got hold of the boy. He was frightened and pale. He screamed with fear and with tears in his innocent eyes said "Ham Moslem Ha! (I am a Moslem)."

"Patloon nickel ka! (Pull his pants down)," Jellal ordered.

The two men pulled the boy's pants down and examined him. Then one burst with

anger, "Na! Haramey ha! (He is not circumcised)."

Jellal ordered: "Kat ka! (Circumcise him)."

One of the two men pulled out a sharp German razor and circumcised the boy. The crowd became more dangerous at the sight of blood. Some smeared their faces with the fresh human blood that oozed from the boy's body. Chandra saw all this but was helpless. The crowd moved and left the boy screaming and bleeding to death. Jellal came to Chandra and said, "This will teach the swine a lesson. We will drink their blood and wash our sins with their blood till we gain our liberty."

Chandra said, "Gee."

They reached an open triangular space. Jellal stood in the center with Chandra and pointing to a small house in between two huge buildings said: "Oh ghrey haramey Hindu co ha! (that house belongs to a dirty Hindu)." He went on, "You know what to do with it. Burn the place. Pakistan Zendeabad."

The mob attacked the house. Chandra saw the flames rising. He could not stand on his feet any longer. This was too much for him. The burning house was *his house*. The crowd rushed to and fro with frantic joy. They came and passed him, brushed against him, pushed him, invited him to take part in the fight for liberty. He heard the dying shrieks of a man and a woman. They sounded familiar. He fell flat on his face. He was unconscious. He dreamed.

\* \* \*

Chandra's half-sleeping mind carried him off into another world. For a few minutes he was in nirvana (heaven). It was a big garden. There were all kinds of fruits and flowers. There were birds and animals of every kind. There were men and women attending the gardens. Chandra saw and was sure that there were men and women of all nationalities. He was surprised to see that there was no difference between the

trees, the flowers, the animals and the birds of Nirvana and those of the world he knew, but the men did differ.

Chandra approached an old man with a long white beard sitting under the shade of a tree. He said: "Is this the Hindu heaven? Can I see my father?"

The old man replied with a smile, "Son, this is heaven for all good men. If your father is here he will not know you and neither will you know him. All good men are alike here."

Chandra said: "But I want to see my father and apologize for not making the least effort to stop the Moslems from burning our house. I should have died defending my faith and home."

The old man put his hand on Chandra's shoulder and said: "Son, you did what a good man would have done. Your father's wish would have been the thing you did. Revenge is sweet. It creates poison in the hearts of men. Love and forgiveness is sweet. It heals every human wound."

Chandra thought that he looked like his father. Chandra was a little puzzled. The old man knew what was in Chandra's mind. He said to him: "Come with me. I will show you what I mean."

He led Chandra through the garden. They came to a group of children. For a moment Chandra could not believe his eyes. He pointed to the children and said: "How is it that here you have children of all races and creeds? There are Hindus, Moslems, Turks, Armenians, Russians, Americans, Jews and Arabs. How come they don't fight?"

The old man patted Chandra's back and said: "Son, how can you tell the difference between those children? The only quality we see in them is goodness. And that is the only means of our identification. We and the other children never heard of Hindus, Moslems, Germans, Russians, Americans or any other such corrupt names which you label each other."

Chandra nodded his head as if to say, "We men have eyes but we are blind. We see the tree but not the wood."

The old man led Chandra to a small room at the end of the garden. It was a dark and small room with a small window. The old man opened the window and said: "My son, look down and see the world from a distance. Look at it, not as a member of any particular group, but as a member of the human society. See if you can tell which of the many groups is the better or the worst of them all."

A small ray of light entered from the window and made the room a little brighter. Chandra moved to the window and looked down on the earth. He saw the rolling world as a huge ball. He could not recognize the various demarcations made by man. He saw hatred and greed in the men who tried to destroy the little good there was. The earth kept on rotating. The atmosphere round it was full of the slogans: "Down with the Hindus; Away with the Moslems; Death to the Communists; Destroy the Capitalists; Kill the Jews; Kill the Arabs."

He heard cries and shrieks of dying men. The smell of fine incense came from churches, temples, mosques, and from synagogues. The honest and simple prayers of the poor masses were crushed and subdued under the heavy, selfish prayers of their rulers who all prayed to the same God to give them power to destroy the so-called enemy.

The room was growing brighter and brighter every second. Chandra knew that the God of love, the God of all mankind, did not favor any particular group. God had nothing to do with the doings of man that called for war and destruction. By how the room had become so bright that he could not see the old man though he was certain that he was present. He felt his presence.

Chandra, still keeping his eyes on the earth, asked the old man in a very pleading voice: "Is there no way by which we men

on earth can live like you men in Nirvana?"

The old man spoke with confidence and wisdom in his words. Chandra could not see him. He could only hear him say: "Sure there is. Some men are beginning to look for it. Some have found it. Others are still searching. They will only find the true means of happiness and love if they are sincere in their convictions. The world cannot be better than what it is unless the leaders of men guide their followers in the right way. The right way is to look for the genuine things of life—love and understanding. They cannot live in peace if they continue looking for gold to satisfy their greed."

The room was now so bright that Chandra could not keep his eyes wide open. The rays of light coming through the window dazzled his eyes. He felt the presence of the old man vanish. He became desperate. He shouted "Nirvana . . . Nirvana . . ." but no answer came. He put his arms across his face to keep the bright rays from dazzling his eyes. He closed them and pressed them with his index finger like a man who just awakes from his sleep. When Chandra opened his eyes, the scene had vanished. He found himself in the same triangular space as the night before. He recollected all that had happened. He knew that all night long he had been dreaming. He opened his eyes and surveyed his surroundings. He saw the vultures, the crows and the rats busy with the human corpses. The streets were empty. He heard nothing. Evidently the mob had disappeared in the shadow of the night—they and their crimes had vanished.

Chandra saw the burned house. It was his home. He stood up and walked toward it. He stood beside the destruction and smiled in a way that he had never done before. He turned his face away from this scene. He lifted his weak legs and moved a step away.

He felt that he had put his right bare

foot on something cold and hard. He lifted his foot and picked it up. He examined it very carefully. On one side he saw his father's name carved on it and on the other side he saw the imprint of the three monkeys which symbolize the age-old Hindu philosophy—SPEAK NO EVIL; HEAR NO EVIL; SEE NO EVIL.

Chandra pressed the metal disc in the palm of his hand and repeated the philosophy several times. Then his face became bright and shining. There was an expression of happiness and satisfaction on it. He thought he had discovered something valuable.

He burst out loud: "And do no evil." He repeated this loudly for a dozen times. He was unaware of the mob who had surrounded him.. He did not hear them. He did not see them. He was inspired. He was happy.

The mob, armed with clubs, pressed on him. They shouted the slogan, "Jai Hind (Victory of India)." A fanatic Hindu, smeared with blood, stepped forward and slapped Chandra and said: "Hooloo toom Moslem ha!"

Chandra smiled. The angry mob could not comprehend its full significance. They took Chandra's smile for an insult. The same man who had slapped Chandra said: 'Ah, Haramey ha, a Hindu nay ha! (He is a tramp, he is not a Hindu)."

Chandra smiled again and this time more confidently. The crowd became furious. They raised their heavy clubs and a dozen heavy blows landed on Chandra's head.

Chandra dropped dead. The metal disc fell from his hand. It rolled away with a heavy metallic sound, but no one heard or saw the disc.

## PROFILE

LOOTFI MINAS

*I look at the sea and the continent,  
Everything has one face, even the sky,  
And I ask myself like a child  
—Where is the other side of all this?*

*I look at myself and wish for my depth,  
But as with the sea and land  
I cannot see my heart and soul—  
I am only their profile.*

## A GLIMPSE AT MODERN TURKEY

### *The Story of a Neglected City: Erzeroum*

By FOUAD ARDA



This article, by Fouad Arda, a Turkish journalist, is taken from the Istanbul Turkish newspaper "Vatan" (Fatherland). Those who have been dazzled by the flood of Turkish propaganda literature of recent years will do well to read Mr. Arda's account if they wish to gain a definite idea of the extent of the progress Mustafa Kemal's "Modern Turkey" has made during the past thirty years."



I have spent three months in Erzeroum, visiting the numerous districts and villages of this historic city. I have held personal conversations with all classes of the people about their problems, political, economic, and social. Being personally acquainted with them, I have had opportunity to enter their homes, meet them in their gatherings, and I have tried to lighten the pain which constricts their hearts. Like a native of Erzeroum, I have felt and lived all the yearnings, sufferings, and grievances of these our compatriots of the eastern provinces.

From the remote times the inhabitants of the eastern provinces have looked upon Erzeroum as the center of Eastern civilization and the champion of the revolution. That is why Erzeroum is called "The Paris of the East." This imaginary comparison has been accepted even by the authorities of the distant provinces who never knew Erzeroum. This historic city is protected by a surrounding wall through whose four huge gates pour in and come out a daily stream of visitors of all categories, including merchants, patients, men with grievances against the government, and lastly, a host of debauchees who seek a licentious life.

Those who have never seen the "Paris of the East" think Erzeroum is more or less a civilized city, whereas, in reality, and quite

unfortunately, it is a conglomeration of rugged, filthy streets, dark, neglected districts, open sewers, and earthen or stone shacks. In short, Erzeroum is a pile of ruins. And this is the Paris of the East, because, compared with others, it's a prosperous city, if we pardon the expression.

During the past year I visited more than 30 provincial centers, and yet I can't recall a single city which was more neglected than Erzeroum. True, there has been some construction there during the past 25 years, such as a few government buildings and residential mansions, or a few broad avenues, but that's all. The few pretentious government buildings or the magnificent mansions of the high-ranking officers built alongside this neglected, ruined, lightless and waterless city, rather leave the general impression that a foreign administration rules the city.

It's true, one will see here a magnificent district surrounding the palace of the Inspector General, the same Inspector General whose office recently was declared as useless and was removed. There are also a series of mansions, a huge square, in the center of which is seen a giant fountain, built at the cost of thousands of gold pounds, but which has no water. This district has cost the people millions, and was built strict-

ly for the residence of high-ranking officers who live away from Erzeroum, and apart from the natives. There is absolutely no inter-relation between this section and the real natives of Erzeroum.

This is the seat of entertainment of all the inspectors, the specialists, the architects, the economists, and government functionaries, whenever they start on an inspection tour. Here in the palace of the Inspector General or the mansions of the high-ranking officers, the visitors take lodging, eat and drink, and are entertained. In Erzeroum proper there is not a single modern hotel which could meet the requirements of a visitor. The municipality controls the electricity, two thirds of which goes to the privileged district. A native of Erzeroum can have electricity only when the honorable mayor is pleased to grant him a license. Street lamps are lit at 9 o'clock, while some streets are entirely without light. In the lighted streets, the current is often cut off, forcing the pedestrians to walk in the dark. To provide against this occurrence, many houses carry oil lamps in addition. In glaring contrast with this, the palace of the defunct Inspector General is flooded in lights. Here, gathered around the roulette, the officers and the visiting guests have a high time, and if they can spare the time, they have a small consultation about the ills of the population of the eastern provinces. They leave the palace with a clear conscience, without having seen the real Erzeroum, the ruined city, and its suffering population.

Those who have seen the Paris of the East can easily imagine how dilapidated, how pitiful, and how primitive are the rest of the provinces. It is really a shameful spectacle, as displayed by this eastern center, now dilapidated and in ruins from the time of the Sultans, as a result of our neglect, carelessness, and crass graft. The so-called economic and social achievements of the past 25 years are nothing but an artificial gloss.

Practically no attention has been paid to the people's needs. Each striking innovation is a mere show devoid of all economic worth. You cannot, for example, even travel by an ox cart in the districts of Erzeroum with its population of 50 to 60 thousand.

In the winter all inter-communication between Erzeroum and the provinces of the interior comes to a stand still. The people's life is in perpetual danger as a result of the lack of physicians, and where there are doctors, there is no drug store. Due to the lack of medical care, such diseases as typhoid, tuberculosis, syphilis, cholera, and leprosy are rampant. The lone city hospital is not enough for local needs, to say nothing of meeting the needs of the entire province.

I am not exaggerating one bit when I say one who has seen the Erzeroum slaughter house surrounded by its stinking gutters will never in his life again taste flesh. I was astounded seeing the vast quantities of dried beef and sausage manufactured here for export.

The entire generation is perishing as a result of negligence, lack of care, and prevalent disease. The heart of man bleeds in him at sight of those pale, wretched, emaciated natives whose ancestors for centuries defended the boundaries of Erzeroum. As everywhere else, here too they have raised huge sums, far above the ability of the people, to erect public schools, but which sums have been dissipated by the authors of graft. The few huge buildings built by unskilled architects are in danger of daily collapse. I came across school buildings which had not seen the face of a pupil for years and were now the lairs of sheep and goats. Animal husbandry is the chief source of people's living, but the ban on animal export this year has caused a crisis as live stock perishes from the lack of food grain. The people have been demanding a canned meat factory, but to date nothing has been done in this respect.

# THE POETRY OF ARMENIA

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## [Part III]

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By VALERY BRUSSOV

(The English Translation by Dr. Arra Avakian)

We find such violent outbursts of passion neither in the sonnets of Bedrorka, who lived a century earlier, nor in the love ballads of Ronsar, who flourished during the following century. The Ohannes poem ends in a conciliatory mood; but the important thing is that he makes such confessions as "Oh, you have burned my heart!", and the like, of the types which have become understood only in our day and only upon the interpretations of Alfred de Musset, Heine, or Bodler.

The medieval Armenian lyric reached the zenith of its development in the sixteenth century when its most outstanding and characteristic champion was *Gregory of Aghtamar*... It is to be presumed that he was born on the island of Aghtamar, in Lake Van, probably at the very close of the fifteenth century. First a monk at the convent, he later became Catholicos of Aghtamar. One of his poems bears the date 1515 written in the script of the writer. He was, furthermore, a contemporary of the Catholicos of All Armenians Michael I (1547-74), which would mean that he lived roughly from 1500 to 1577.

It is apparent that at this period the condition of the Armenian people not only had not improved over that of the previous period but that it had become actually more unbearable, if such a thing were possible. The missions of Armenian delegations to

European courts, especially those to Venice, to the Pope, and to the German Emperor (1547-50), were not successful; on the contrary, they served to enrage the Mohammedans. Persia commenced to lay Armenian lands in waste, and the advance of the Turkish armies against Persia completed the destruction. In the event of this period of misery, the development of new centers for Armenian culture, in Europe, was a comforting circumstance.

The first Armenian book was published in 1512, and the first Armenian press was established at Venice under the auspices of Catholicos Michael in the same year. This press was later moved to Constantinople. And these were the feeble shouts of a future revival.

Gregory was obliged to work and create under the distressing conditions under which Armenia lived in his time. His verses are the only examples we have with us today of his work. These poems, however, nearly twenty in number, show that he possessed, besides his poetic skill, a singular literary talent. All the poems of Gregory show deep thought; they rank among the most brilliant examples of Armenia's medieval lyric poetry both through their general conception, and their facility of execution.

Although his entire life was spent within monastery walls, his verses, we find, are interwoven with Western qualities—har-

mony of structure, and, later, Christian ideals. The pictures, the analogies, the entire spirit of the poems of Gregory of Aghtamar, are, however, Eastern. His "Ode to a Bishop," which is a variation of Phrig's protestations against the unfairness of fate, has a decidedly Eastern color. Even more noticeable as a characteristically Eastern work is his "Ode" in which the poet, after having sung the praises of his lover, seeks and finds tens of flaming pictures comparing her to the sun, the moon, the stars, the precious gem, the fragrant tree, the radiant flower—to all that is beautiful in this world. That rich poem, imbued with ardent passion, is characteristic of eastern poetry. It is like a beautiful, flashing jewel reflecting all the colors of the rainbow. Still another poem of Gregory of Aghtamar entitled "Ode to the Rose and the Nightingale" is also filled with the spirit of the poetry of the east.

It is probable that the poetry of *Nahabed Koochag* also belongs to the sixteenth century, but it is now established that, except in name, there was nothing common between him and another poet Koochag who lived during the early part of that century in Van, in the vicinity of Akn, more than likely, since his poems both in form and expression are well reminiscent of the popular songs of the district.

No matter who the historical Nahabed Koochag may have been, or no matter when he lived, the fact remains that his poems we have with us today remain the rarest gems of Armenian poetry. Nahabed Koochag is best known for his directness and his natural inspiration. This had led some to consider Koochag simply a collector of popular songs, a belief further strengthened by the presence of certain popular motifs, and even entire poems certainly belonging to popular poetry within the structure of his verse.

Such conjectures, however, are refuted by the fact that a very definite literary style

is evident in his other writings. He may have availed himself of themes taken from popular song, but he cultivated many things in his own original and characteristic manner.

Rich specimens of Koochag's literary creations remain with us today. He has left us short admonitory works, mostly quatrains, and emotional and nomadic love songs. His quatrains, each and every one, are examples of Eastern philosophy. They are mostly of the same thought and theme as the admonitory verses of the Persian poets—the futility of life, the evils of falsehood, the sublimity of silence, and the like. All this, nevertheless, is saturated with a Christian attitude toward the world in general.

In his love songs, Koochag is at his best. These brief poems, often only quatrains, bear a purely Eastern coloring, being fiery and brilliant, and occasionally impatient. The passion in his verses have an elevating effect upon the scheme of spiritual love—a trait which marks him further as genuinely Eastern.

The real power and appeal of Koochag's verse lies, however, in his sincerity. He has rendered no artificial judgements in his poems which are neither theoretical or allegorical in character. Koochag's verses, rather, are unrestrained outbursts of the soul, each a confession that the poet himself lived the life of which he wrote.

Chobanian, whom we have quoted from time to time, places Koochag on a par with the most famous of Eastern poets, with Saadi, Hafiz, and even with Omar Khayyam, whose lyrics have served princes and kings. Since these people were court poets, their poetry speaks of royalty, with its glitter and splendor. But this is lacking in Koochag's simple songs. His style of expression places him in a poetic category all his own. He is wont to be with the crowds in the streets rather than with the silken nobility of the palace. He speaks not for the strong, but

for the common people; and he bowed before but one Sultan—the Sultan of Love—, his master.

Chobanian rightfully compares Koochag with the nineteenth century poets Heine, Verlaine, and others. Though a poet of the sixteenth century, Koochag imbued his verses with specimens of genuine lyric poesy as we understand that term today. It is poetry which is divine, free and genuine; it is poetry the sole purpose of which is to accord a medium of expression for that feeling which at the moment dominates the spirit of the poet.

Medieval Armenian poetry was beginning to die by the seventeenth century. Conditions in Armenia were becoming more and more unbearable. The Armenian communities in the dispersion, however, were becoming more firmly established, and there a new light was to be born to light the torch of the new Armenian Renaissance.

There existed almost no opportunity for literary activity within the bounds of old Armenia, desolated, as it was, by the planned policies of the Sultans and the Shahs. Within the walls of the monasteries, however, there were still found some diligent men who tried, at least, to reproduce the manuscripts of their predecessors, the fruits of happier Armenian days. Nothing, nevertheless, could silence the voice of the poet and, in spite of prevailing conditions, several poet-monks sprang from the native soil. The freshness and vigor of their poetry is the best proof of the strength of the people's spirit—a spirit which no misfortune can crush.

*Jeremiah Keomoorjian*, born in the year 1600, was the first writer of that century. He had a prolific pen. This man translated many works into the Armenian from the Latin and the Greek, wrote treatises on theology, and was responsible for a "History of the Ottoman Empire," a contemporary history, and for other works written in the classical Armenian. He wrote also in the

Turkish, and translated into that language parts of the history of Moses of Khoren.

But Koemoorjian was also something of a poet. Besides the metrical "History of Alexandria," he wrote a series of versed lyrics both in the popular Armenian, and in the Turkish. The poetry of this scribe is a continuation of the medieval lyric; in his verses one can hear the true voice of his soul.

The distinctive characteristic of Koemoorjian's lyrics is the fact that he sings principally of mutual love—not only the joy of loving, but of being loved.

*Hovnatan Naghash*, who lived in the latter part of the seventeenth century and who died in 1722, wielded even a greater influence than Koemoorjian. He was, like Mugerdtich of Naghash, a painter; and to Hovnatan we owe the beautiful murals of Etchmiadzin.

All of Hovnatan's poems sing the praises of love, and they are all flooded with the rays of the sun. Here and there we find a hint of sarcasm as if the poet himself were ridiculing the worn-out style of the medieval lyric. These songs abound in such joy and mirth that they completely fascinate the reader.

Because of his creative style, this monastic poet is almost identical with the popular troubadours who were to be found in all parts of Armenia during that century. Although Hovnatan Naghash was the last of the monastic poets, he may be ranked, yet, as a troubadour, and therein lies the historical value of his poetry. When *monastic poetry* gave way to *troubadouric poetry*, a new epoch in Armenian literature was opened. Popular singers and minstrels, by the way, had existed in Armenia from time immemorial. They are mentioned, for instance, by Moses of Khoren.

A poetic people, the Armenians liked to hear songs at all their festivals. Popular singers or minstrels were always welcome guests both at such family feasts as wed-

dings, and baptisms, and at public festivals, market-places, and taverns. It was a custom of the people to accord to them the place of honor at all festivals, and even their instruments—the violin, guitar—were distinctively handled. When the minstrel began his songs, everyone fell silent and attentive. It was also an ancient custom to have these troubadours compete with one another; and on such occasions, they would sing their extemporaneously composed songs, the loser, according to custom, surrendering his violin to the winner.

It is probable that many of the Armenian "folk songs" which are still popular to-day are songs composed by these troubadours at just such contests. For a long time, however, no one thought of taking down these spontaneously conceived songs in order to preserve them for posterity. They were retained in the mind of the composer and, after his death, by those whom he had made the legatee of his songs; and it often happened that when these few persons were dead and buried, their songs were interred with them, and were lost to the living.

It was not till the eighteenth century that a new type of troubadour developed in Armenia. He was a popular singer who knew the value of his own inspirations and preserved them for posterity. Such a minstrel is, to a certain extent, a literary man, one who is familiar with the poetry of the past because he bequeathes his verses to the coming generations. The demands of the people, after all, were becoming higher. They were beginning to ask of the writer not only the traditional elements, but also individuality, originality, and depth of contents. By this time, the court minstrels had made their appearance at the royal court of Georgia where the Armenian language was favorably received. The more the number of minstrels increased and the people advanced culturally, consequently, the more distinctive became the new style of the troubadour who, even though he leaned

upon the traditions of Armenia's medieval lyrics, developed it by a new technique. Among the first of the troubadours of this new school was one *Stepanos*, who lived probably in the seventeenth century. A part of the songs of this minstrel have come down to us today.

It was *Sayat-Nova*, however, who raised the poetry of these troubadours to a new height. Through his genius, the profession of the popular singer merged into a poet's sublime call. We might say that before the advent of Sayat Nova, the art of his predecessors amounted to nothing. They all seem to fade to nothingness in the brilliant light of Sayat-Nova's art.

Sayat-Nova was the first to prove, through his personal example, the potential power in the voice of the popular singer. He showed that as a singer, he was to bring not only joy and merriment to festivals, but he was to be a teacher and a prophet. Sayat-Nova had inherited the style of his predecessors, but he had added to that his seal of perfection.

It was then that the people suddenly realized the wealth and magnificence that are found in this troubadouric songs, even though many of them were written around trivial subjects. Thus, Sayat-Nova came along at the time when the monastic poetry of the scholarly *vartabeds*, the teachers, was in its dying days, to prove that Armenia's poetry still lived, but that it had forsaken the gloomy confines of the monasteries to come to live among the people. And this note of freedom was evident in the songs of the troubadours who sang in the market-places, on the commons, or at the family feast.

Sayat-Nova was born in Tiflis in 1719 and died, that is he was killed, at the same place in 1795. His real name was Haroutune, "Sayat-Nova" being a pseudonym which, according to the researches of Hovhannes Toumanian, means "king of songs" or "prince of harmony" in the Hindustani

tongue which is well known in Middle Asia. Young Haroutune's father had placed him as an apprentice to a weaver even though, even as a lad, he had decided to become a troubadour. During his free hours, the young man would hasten off to listen to the contests between the singers. He learned to play the violin and guitar at an early age, and started to compose songs which he would first sing before his friends and then before the wealthy people of Tiflis who often invited the talented youth to sing at their gatherings. These early successes prompted the lad to follow definitely the profession of the minstrel. He adopted the name of Sayat-Nova and became soon the beloved troubadour of Tiflis.

Judging from his works, Sayat-Nova must have had quite an extensive knowledge. His verses deal with profound subjects, with various countries and nations, and echo the feeling of the Persian poets, from whom he borrowed especially his style of writing. He also knew many languages, writing verses not only in the Armenian, but in Georgian and Turkish.

Of all the works of Sayat Nova, only 115 of his poems written in the Tartar language, and 46 in the Armenian, have come down to posterity. The Georgians themselves consider him as being their poet.

The life story of Sayat Nova has not as yet been sufficiently studied. It is a known fact, however, that he enjoyed the favor of the Georgian king Heracles II who appreciated his talents to such an extent that he appointed him his court minstrel.

The main events in the life of this minstrel took place in the court of the Georgian king. Most of his poems are dedicated to the royal princess, the king's daughter, whom he loved madly.

Later on, when Sayat-Nova was no longer young, he gave up his easy life at the court and confined himself within the monastery of St. Nishan at Haghbad. Many attribute his sudden decision to retire into a monas-

tory to the death of his wife Marmar in 1770. At the monastery, he was renamed David.

According to the recent archival researches of Hovhannes Toumanian, Sayat-Nova was later ordained Bishop of Tiflis' Armenians by the Armenian Catholicos but only upon the insistence of the Georgian king.

Even within the grim walls of the monastery, however, Bishop David could not overcome the poetic urge which impelled his soul. Even there he continued to write verses and to dream of public minstrel contests.

It is said that our newly ordained bishop often secretly left the confines of the monastery walls, and, disguised as a minstrel, went among the people of Tiflis, singing his songs. For example, once when he heard that a new and brilliant troubadour had appeared in Tiflis—a bard who excelled all others in grace and splendor—he could not suppress his mad desire to test his own talents against those of the newcomer. He donned his old minstrel clothes, took off his kamancha, went into the common, and defeated his youthful competitor.

There are preserved certain manuscripts in which the Catholicos complains to the king concerning the escapades of the new bishop, and in which the king is assured that David's conduct will become a public scandal. The aged poet was threatened with deprivation of his rank, but the king requested that his beloved minstrel be left alone.

In 1795, The Persian Shah Agha Mahmoud Khan besieged Tiflis, and the people of that city were in danger of a terrible massacre. When the aged troubadour learned of this, he left the monastery and hurried to the capital city to protect the members of his family. He succeeded in evacuating his sons from the city, sent them to Mozdag where they were no longer in danger. Sayat-Nova himself, either because he did not find the occasion to es-

cape, or because he did not wish to leave the people, remained in Tiflis.

However the case may be, Sayat Nova was in Tiflis on the day when that city was taken by the Persian horde. While the poet-bishop and his people were praying on bended knee within the mother church, the Persians submitted a demand that they all leave the church and embrace Mohammedanism. Sayat-Nova's answer was a poem in the Tartaric:

*"This church ne'er will I vacate,  
Nor renounce my Christian faith."*

Upon that, the Mohammedan rabble dragged the aged man from the altar and killed him on the very threshold of his church.

Upon that very spot, there stands today a marble tablet upon which are inscribed the dates of Sayat-Nova's birth and death, and three lines of his poetry.

Upon first glance, the contents of Sayat-Nova's verses seem narrowly restricted, and monotonous in form. But what inexhaustible variations the poet has been able to put in that seemingly colorless style. Almost all his poems speak of love, and yet, how colorful are his various poems—how full of gentleness then fiery passion, of the full despair of self-nurtured suspicions which surrenders to the sublime and proud inspiration of the artist!

One might call Sayat-Nova a "poet who worked and blended with colors." As early as the eighteenth century he had carried out the legacy which Verlaine left a century later!

*Pas la couler, rien que la nuance!—  
"No color, just shading or blending!"*

Yes, in all truth; we do not want dazzling colors. The intrinsic poet accords his reader or listener an unconscious passage from one thought to another,—from one color to another. And how deep, how sharp and succulent are the "colorations" in Sayat-

Nova's songs! We can see in them many burning colors; and the pitch-paint portraits of less skillful, or more accurately, less ingenious, poets can not compete with his colorations. Sayat-Nova, the artist, has painted his inspiring verses with a master's brush, giving them delicate and transparent shades.

Sayat-Nova has established and given to the troubadouric songs a distinct style which is almost similar to the Persian "Gazelle," a form of the poetry of that country. After his death, this style became more popular and finally was dominant among all the minstrels. Without a doubt, the repetition of the same word (or a series of similar words) at the end of a whole series of verses, which is required by this style, obliges the poet to *seek great variety* in a single whole. At the same time, this style, almost independent of the poet, gives his verse a separate euphony, a dainty word-melody. Sayat-Nova, in addition, gave special care to the phnctics of his songs, which are harmoniously monotonal repetitions in half lines. He is one of the greatest masters of the "phonic verse," a type of poetry known throughout the world. He is, at the same time, a great inventor who knows how to seek and find novelty in song.

In the light of the latter, Sayat-Nova may be compared with the Russian poet G. T. Balmont.

The followers and imitators have rendered degenerate his distinctive style. That laudable style has become a mere repetition, the word-melody has become incoherent play-on-words, the subtle changes of color have become depressingly monotonous; with Sayat-Nova, however, everything was vivacious, brisk, and full of the vigor of a real poet's ingenuity. The poet was justified when he said with pride—the same pride, mind you, which created the "Memorial Statue" of Horatius and Pushkin—that "My foundation is as firm as granite." We are positive that the lane to Sayat-

Nova's statue will never become covered with moss.

All the people may very well be, and rightfully so, proud of Sayat-Nova. Men like Sayat-Nova, who possess gifts from heaven appear on this earth only now and then. Such geniuses who are blessings to their times and their fatherland are the chosen children of Providence.

The art of minstrelcy developed highly by Sayat-Nova, of course, produced a great many followers and imitators, and a "Sayat-Nova School" was quickly established.

Even today, all Armenian minstrels are subject to his domineering influence. All of them tread the path he marked. For this reason, we have deemed it unnecessary to dwell upon the individual troubadours who lived during the latter part of the eighteenth century and during the nineteenth century, though amongst them were found many talented minstrels who were original in their creations, and though many of them possessed the skill of creating lovely euphonious lines. But all of them have been merely talented pupils of the master, and not one of them went beyond the bounds set by Sayat-Nova.

We will add in passing that the number of nineteenth century troubadours who collected in writing their own verses is great. Their lyrics are interesting both historically and artistically. But since it is the purpose of this treatise to present only the general history of the development of Armenian poetry, we cannot discuss all these minstrels.

Two of these troubadours, however, are sufficiently important, for two reasons, to command the attention of this paper: first, because they represent the popular minstrels of our day, and secondly, because they, more than the others, zealously cultivated originality in their expressions. We refer to the minstrels Ghoongianos and Djivani.

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Ghoongianos was born in Erzeroum at the close of the eighteenth century. After

remaining in a monastery for a number of years, he served as secretary to Inbrahim Pasha of Egypt. Still later, leaving his position, he adopted the wandering life of a troubadour, living in great poverty. During the course of his meanderings, he visited St. Petersburg. Ghoongianos died in the middle of the nineteenth century in the village of Varevan.

The minstrel Djivani is a contemporary of ours. Born 1846 in one of the villages near Akhalkalak, he became a wandering minstrel at a very early age. Djivani formed an excellent chorus which sang his compositions in Alexandropol, Tiflis, Baku, Batum, and Kars. He died in 1909.

Ghoongianos' poetry is famous for its mystic coloration which is uncommon to troubadouric songs.

Djivani's poetry is more diversified. In his songs, he touches upon a great variety of themes; from a love-singer he turns moralist; he sings of contemporaneous events, of the good and the bad, and writes light and gay songs, and more.

Among other things, Djivani's songs are distinctly indicative of the influence of books. With the exception of a series of poems resembling those of Sayat-Nova, Djivani's creations are new and beautiful poems which undoubtedly will remain in the poetry of Armenia.

The poetry of Ghoongianos and Djivani, however, belong to the next period. Before Djivani commenced his career, the new school of poetry—not that of the popular singers, but of the written poem, or as it is customarily, though incorrectly called, the "artistic poetry"—was established.

Among the Western Armenians of Constantinople and the European communities, as well as among the Russian Armenians, the people of the Armenian provinces, especially of Tiflis, and the Armenian community at Moscow, there began to blossom forth a new Armenian literature which re-

established the place of Armenian letters in the literature of the world. The new literary languages, or rather the two new literary languages—the Western and the Russian Armenian, were already cultivated. Several generations of Armenian writers had already taken upon themselves the difficult and responsible, but worthwhile, task of introducing to the Armenian people all that had been created by European literature during the course of the centuries when Armenia was cut off from world culture and civilization.

The history of the new Armenian literature is a field of study still untouched. In this modest work we cannot study fully all aspects of that science. Many reasons, one of which is that this writer does not believe himself prepared to present a comprehensive study of the entire matter, oblige us to limit ourselves to a general study of the trends of the new literature. We shall, therefore, focus our attentions on the works of those poets of the older generation who, more or less, have come to the end of their creative years, or who have passed on in comparatively recent times.

The younger poets, on the other hand, who continue to search along the paths of poetry are not yet subjects for *history* since their works have not yet been examined, criticised, and evaluated.

The forward progress of Armenian literature is irrevocably linked with the beneficial activities of Mekhitar of Sebastia (1676-1749) whose career started in Constantinople and continued at a later time in Venice.

Through the efforts of this man, a long list of savants, writers, and uncommonly successful researchists has resulted. The Mekhitarians have published dictionaries and text-books on the Armenian "krapar." They have done excellent work in the matter of Armenian history; they have executed translations of classic European works, and

the like, which have left a great impression upon Armenian literature.

A few Mekhitarist priest-savants later went on to Vienna where they continued their learned and beneficial efforts. Out of the ranks of the Mekhitarians there came forth the foremost figures of Armenia's new poetry. Pakradouni and Alishan were two of this company.

The first, *Arsen Pakradouni* (1790-1866), was a champion of the pseudo-classical school which at that time dominated European letters. Ghevont Alishan, too, did not escape that influence; but he, in turn, freed himself from its bondage. Leaving the classical Armenian, in which all his first works were couched, he adopted the popular Armenian, the Constantinople dialect.

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*Ghevont Alishan* (1820-1901), has left a rich heritage of valuable and scholarly works pertaining to history, archaeology, geography, and such. But he is also a well-known poet, the collection of his poems filling five volumes. Alishan's poetic technique reached a high level of perfection. Many people even today read his poems with great pleasure, and marvel at his sincere and beautiful inspirations.

Alishan also composed numerous religious poems, prayers, and church hymns. Some of his poems tell of the past history of Armenia, and present vivid descriptions of nature. His profound love for his fatherland gives his poetry a distinct depth. It is the exiled poet who sings of his homeland.

But we must regard two poets of the succeeding generation—Beshigtashlian and Tourian—as the real founders of the "Turkish Armenian School," or the "Constantinople School." All the works of these two poets have been executed in the modern, or popular, Armenian.

In order to appreciate fully these men and the founders of their contemporary "Russian Armenian School," we must rec-

ognize the magnitude of the difficulties with which they were faced. First of all, they were forced to choose between the numerous Armenian dialects; they had to produce a new tool for literature and especially poetic expression. In other words, they had to *create a language* that would render unified the contradictory elements of the popular dialects. They then had to adapt that language to poetic expression in such a manner that all the colors of a subtle mind and the emotion's of man's soul could be effectively presented.

This problem was resolved, of course, both by the poets and the prose writers; but the responsibility lay more heavily upon those who composed metrical lines. They had to give beauty to the language and at the same time keep unity of expression.

Besides this, there existed another grave and difficult problem. The new Armenian poetry had to reduce the force of European literary influence upon itself. This European literature, which had already enjoyed a long existence by the middle of the nineteenth century, had gone through successive periods in which it had been dominated by pseudo-classicism, sentimentalism, and romanticism. That literature was now gripped by realism.

Europe had already had its Goethe and Schiller, its Victor Hugo and Musset, its Byron and Shelley, not to mention its earlier poets. It was necessary then to alter the fundamental lines of their creations to make them familiar to the Armenian soul.

In short, the founders of the new Armenian literature did not have the right to be artists alone. The sad plight of their fatherland required them to become rhetoricians, as well as apostles of half forgotten truths. In truth, they had to become men who aroused the people in order that they might find themselves. They had to inspire life and spirit in their love for the fatherland, they had to do their utmost to heal century-old wounds, they had to become pillars of

faith for a better and freer future.

Without ever forgetting these great ideals, none of which may be sacrificed, we must make a rapid survey of the works of Beshigtashlian, Tourian, Badganian, Shah-Aziz, and others who, though they were revivers, were unable to remain true poets.

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*Megerditch Beshigtashlian* (1828-1868) was the direct pupil of Alishan, for he had received his training under the Mekhitarians. Beshigtashlian, however, did not cloister himself within the walls of a monastery; his life was tempestuous, and his poetic expressions were full of outbursts of passion, hope, or despair. Beshigtashlian's personal life was replete with grave misfortunes, but he never bowed before the strong, nor did he in any way stain his reputation. He lived modestly and with dignity. An industrious man, he was the object of the worship of his pupils. He experienced an unsuccessful love affair, but found consolation in pure and sincere friendship. Thanks to his brilliant and honest nature, he had more friends than enemies.

Beshigtashlian's creations were appreciated even in his own day. During his last days, when he was on his death-bed, many people visited his home to inquire after his condition. This touched and encouraged the modest poet.

Of all his works, Beshigtashlian's tragedies have enjoyed the greatest popularity, especially those whose themes are taken from Armenian history. Putting aside the matter of form, these plays, by virtue of their sublime content, have acted as purifying agents on the people.

In the field of the lyric, the best of Beshigtashlian's verses are those which are inspired by love for the fatherland. He has been able to approach such a subject in a style not strictly common or conventional, but has treated each individual verse with fascinating novelty. As a poet of nature, moreover, Beshigtashlian merits attention,

for he understood and loved nature, he "breathed the same breath" with it. Love also commands an important place in his poetry.

Yury Veselovsky in his treatise on Beshigtashlian remarks fittingly that "the poet possesses an unusual skill in combining in his love poems the eastern color with European thought and psychology."

From that point of view, Beshigtashlian was the true successor to the fundamental tradition of the old Armenian poetry.

We must add that the influence of Heine and Musset, and of several other nineteenth century poets, may be detected in his poetry. The poetic language of his verses, in addition, bears the traces of his early training.

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*Bedros Tourian* (1851-1872) was an altogether different type of poet. He was really the poet of the coming generation. He died when he had scarcely lived his twentieth year. Tourian was like a brilliant meteor splitting the skies of Armenian literature.

Born in Constantinople of poor parents, and having no patron, influential teacher, or companion, he studied only in the public schools of that city. Tourian is solely responsible for his training and literary success. Passionate, irritable, and stubborn by nature, Tourian led a tempestuous life, always being called upon to struggle against poverty, against the misunderstanding of his contemporaries and against the prejudices which are not peculiar to Armenians.

Tourian has written a series of plays, and did some acting; but he is more supremely powerful as a lyricist. But lyric is the voice of youth, and the premature death of Tourian does not permit judgement as to how successful a dramatist he might have become if he had lived and obtained the experience that life could offer.

Tourian was a romanticist both by conviction and nature. In his comparatively

few poems he declares to the world his ardent love for his people. He tells of his beliefs anent the individual. He speaks of the lamentations which had also become the lamentations of all thinking men who surrounded him. His appeal to God in his "Complaints" (*Drdoonchner*), though full of the hyperbolies characteristic of the Romantic school, yet torments the soul of a man by its sincerity and depths of emotion.

Youthful Tourian will remain in Armenian literature like a brilliant and fiery planet. He showed the other poets what was meant by temperament, by the vehemence of living; and his style often transcended the bounds of both "school" and "technique." Therein lies the value of his poetry. He is important especially in "Turkish-Armenian" poetry, the later writers of which school displayed unnecessary restraints, often bowing before the cold dictates of the Parnassian school and making the philosophy of "impeccability" their ideal.

Incidentally, many of Tourian's poems are striking for their illusive quality, which is particularly pleasant. In this, the French poets Victor Hugo and Lamartine have been his beloved teachers.

Along with Beshigtashlian and Tourian, the "Turkish Armenian" school has had other familiar poets whose works fall between the years 1825 and 1875. Amongst these poems there have been other talented poets whose works have not remained unknown in Armenian literature.

Amongst these, *Calfaian* and *Ajemian* belong to the first period. *Calfaian*, known as Khoren Narbey, 1831-1892, though originally a Mehkitarist, subsequently left the monastery. *Ajemian*, who was born in 1838, was a dramatist and a lyricist who wrote several lovely poems.

These two writers, and their successors, among whom were Vosgianian, Russianian, Dzerentz, Mamourian, Odian, Baronian, Demirjibashian, were, without a doubt, persons with talent. By their writings, they

enriched, cultivated, and purified the modern with new words and expressions. These masters of the "Turkish-Armenian" school, furthermore, "transplanted" into the soil of Armenian literature the flowers of western poetry, particularly of the French—although not intentionally, but simply because they personally were influenced by them. Either by direct translations, or by intentional imitations and also by involuntary recollections, they transferred into the Armenian poetry the motifs of the French Romantics and partly that of the Parnassians—Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Alfred de Musset, Lamartine, Sully-Prudhomme, and others. That activity paved the way for the flourishing state of the Turkish-Armenian school of the second period which extended from the last part of the nineteenth century to the first part of the twentieth.

There was also a series of other poets, whom we shall not enumerate here, who perfected the matter of *poetic technique* to a high degree of development, polishing the verse, correcting the meter. They also essayed all types of poetry; for example one developed the sonnet. These poets handed down to the succeeding generations a flexible tool which could be adapted to express all the sentiments and emotions of man.

The development of the "Russian-Armenian" school was effected through different channels. Its representatives entered the literary field at a much later time.

Even at the beginning of the eighteenth century, after the time when in the west, thanks to the efforts of the Mekhitarists, a new Armenian literature was being developed, the Russian-Armenians had practically no literature of their own, though they relied upon the dead classical Armenian language for their literary expressions. We may, of course, disregard some small independent literary efforts—a few text-books, and the publications of some manuscripts, and the like.

It was not until the middle of the nine-

teenth century that the need to express the popular spirit in literature became felt. At a time when the western Armenians were doing their utmost to develop and make suitable for poetic expression the Constantinople dialect, the first attempts were being made in Russian-Armenia to write literature in the Erivan dialect which, more than incidentally, became the literary language of all Russian-Armenians.

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*Khachadour Abovian* (1803-1848) was the forerunner of the new Russian-Armenian school. He wrote his "Verk Haiastani" (The Wounds of Armenia) in 1840, a work which, however, was not published until 1858. The foundation stones for periodical newspapers, done in the vernacular, in Russian-Armenia were laid in the 1850s.

In 1850-51, *Gabriel Badgarian*, the father of poet Raphael Badgarian, published, in Tiflis, the first Russian-Armenian periodical, called "Ararat."

Thanks to the zealous activity of *S. Nazariantz* and *Michael Nalbandian*, another Armenian periodical, "Hiusisapayl" (Northern Lights), was founded in Moscow in 1858 and lasted several years.

*Gregory Ardzrouni*, founded "Mushag" (Culture) in Tiflis, in 1872.

These publications brought to light a complete set of literary creations—articles, stories, as well as novels and poetry.

Among the more outstanding of the Russian-Armenian writers we must mention *Raffi* (1853-88) whose profound novels brought to him much justly deserved popularity. *Gabriel Sundoungiantz* (1825-1912) was equally famous, being the founder of the Armenian theater and the author of a number of marvelous temporal plays. *Berj Broshian*, whose first novel "Sos yev Vartitair" (Sos and Vartitair), written in the Ashdarag dialect, appeared in 1860, was still another well-known writer. Finally, we have the two founders of the Russian-Ar-

menian poetry, R. Badgianian and S. Shah-Aziz.

\* \* \*

*Raphael Badgianian* (1830-1892) was born of a family devoted to literary pursuits. His grandfather Kerovpe Badgianian, who composed songs beloved by his contemporaries, had left Constantinople to live in Nor-Nakhitchewan. The poet's father, too, the priest Gabriel, although the author of several poems, devoted most of his time to publications, being the founder, as we have said, of the first Russian-Armenian journal. All three sons of the priest Gabriel, like their father, became writers. Michael wrote newspaper articles, and comedies, and organized the production of the first Armenian play in Tiflis. Kerovpe, professor of Armenian at the University of St. Petersburg, left a series of scientific studies and translations of the classical poetry of Europe. Raphael Badgianian became a famous poet.

When his sons were still very young, good priest Gabriel tried to create and encourage literary taste and interest in them. The future poet lived in a completely literary atmosphere during the early days of his childhood. The father himself guided the youth's early literary yens, and published some of his poems in his "Ararat." Raphael's very early education was received under his father who conducted a school in Nakhitchewan.

In 1843, the future poet entered Moscow's Lazarian Academy, founded in 1815, and, later on, attended classes at the University of Dorpat.

Badgianian wrote many poems during his school years. The earlier ones were done in the classical language, but all his later works were in the vernacular, a mixture of the dialects of Erivan, Nor-Nakhitchewan, and As-trakhan. Only those poems which were written during the latter part of the period in which the modern Armenian was beginning to become the official language were in the

modern Armenian. Many of the early poems of Badgianian were inspired by and infused with such a spirit of youth that even today the young people still sing them with pleasure. His more sedate works were composed after the middle years of the 1850s.

In 1855, Badgianian, with a few of his friends, published the first anthology of his poetry under the pseudonym of *Kamar Katiba*, a composite name consisting of the initial syllables of the three publishers. The theme of the little book was "Write as you speak, and speak as you write," a quotation from the Russian writer Karamazin.

The poem "Tears of the Arax" which appeared subsequently brought a great deal of attention to the young man, and this newly-won popularity became even more enhanced with the publication of each succeeding poem or literary work.

At one time, he was engaged in publishing in Petersburg an Armenian review named "Hiuisi" (North), but he soon discontinued that publication and moved back to Nor-Nakhitchewan where, following his father's example, he became engaged in elementary school work out of necessity; for, at that time, a purely literary occupation did not suffice to accord a means of livelihood to an Armenian writer. But even then, writing continued to be Badgianian's favorite activity and he remained an ardent contributor to the Armenian papers. His poetry gained popularity upon the moment of their publication, for the people saw in Badgianian the *singer of their race*. In a very short time, his verses found their way into the school textbooks, and the children were being educated with his poetry.

During the last years of his life, Badgianian was the object of the people's respect and affection. This popularity completely drowned out the noise raised by several hostile individuals who felt the steel of the poet's satires. But despite this popularity, the material well-being of our poet continued uncertain; as a matter of fact, his poverty became so great that his friends had to

resort to popular subscription in order that he might be given medical attention during a serious illness. Although the necessary steps were taken and sufficient funds were raised, it became impossible to save the po-

et's life, and he died in his native city, and was buried there although he had expressed the desire to be buried at Etchmiadzin, where there stands today a simple little statue as a memorial of his greatness.

(To be continued)

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## HEIRLOOM

DIANA DER HOVANESSIAN

*This is my golden dancing belt,  
With the pieces bright and round.  
With every turning dancing step,  
It sings a shakour-shookour sound.*

*I wish it were my grandmother's  
That decked her wedding gown.  
I wish it were my grandmother's  
From her old and far-off home.*

*A stranger wears her kamar,  
With its pieces round and bright,  
But it dances not her Naz Bar  
As my belt dances tonight.*

# THE DEFENSE OF VAN

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## (Part III)

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By ONNIG MEKHITARIAN

(Translated from the original Armenian by  
Hrayr Baghdoian)

At exactly 6:00 A.M., we heard single shots than a general fusillade from the direction of the open plain near Urpad Brook, to the east of Aikestan.

The fighting that started at Urpad Brook set fire to all of Aikestan in a few moments. Outside in the streets, a great and turbulent panic took place. Children, oldsters, women, and men ran out into the streets. Some were trembling in fear; others were stamping their feet on the ground from anger and nervousness; many were shouting blessings on the Armenian fighters, and crying "Chan! Chan!" There were pale and hopeless faces. And beyond, thrusting the mob to right and left, light-footed and fearless, the youthful and boyish braves were running toward the barricades.

The rifle-reports from Urpad Brook were first echoed by the roar of old-style Mausers from the Turkish Haji Bekir Armory. Immediately afterwards, these were joined by the sharper cracks and whining ricochets of the newer Mausers from the Toprak Kaleh and Hamud Agha Armories. The next moment, the reports of all kinds of arms began from every direction—from the Hainguzes to Khatch Street and all around Aikestan. The enemy had approximately one rifle for every ten paces of his front.

The spirits of the Military Council (the Armenian Staff) which the day before had been somewhat depressed in view of the uncertain tomorrow, had undergone a sudden change. A tidal wave seemed to originate in their headquarters and spread to all the barricades and into the very marrows of all the Armenians of Aikestan. The entire moving force behind that spirit was Aram, assisted by the Members of the Military Council.

Messengers were continuously arriving from the barricades, bringing information, receiving orders, and returning at once to their sectors. The fight had begun at Aikestan on every front. The fighting at Urpad Brook had been the signal for the Turks to take the initiative and to attack everywhere, showering fire upon the Armenian positions. But everywhere they met tense resistance at the hands of the Armenian soldiers.

The first to feel the impact of the Turkish shells were our most important positions, those at the houses of Sahag Bey and Tovmazian. The Turkish infantry was waiting in ambush hardly twenty or thirty paces directly in front of these positions.

A short while later, the echoes of cannon spread out, and the shells commenced falling in almost all directions, bursting especial-

ly over our most vital positions. An hour later, cannon began to roar on the heights of Toprak Kaleh and from the Haji Bekir Armory; but the shells from these guns fell not only on our positions, but also in the streets, on the defenseless buildings and open squares.

The barricade at Sahag Bey's was submitted to an especially vigorous bombardment. The Turks knew very well that by taking this position, they would not only break our morale, but in fact would smash the heart of Aikestan, separating it in two.

Thinking he saw the marks of terror on the face of the messenger from the Sahag Bey barricade, Aram took him aside at once, and after a short questioning, gave several hurried commands to the members of the Military Council. He himself started off for the barricade with a group of companions in order to examine personally the situation there.

It was impossible to go through the streets. Every step of the way was fraught with danger. Not only were rifle bullets flying continuously, and not only were the ricochets bursting around like frightened hornets, but shrapnel burst on the tops of the poplars and rattled on the streets.

I was in Aram's party. Teo led the way through the gardens and we followed him silently. The danger was the same in the gardens. A shower of bullets and shrapnel fell all around us. It was awful—especially when the Turkish position in the English Consulate building hailed bullets on us. The post dominated all the Armenian streets and gardens in Norashen.

Sometimes waiting for five or ten minutes until they ceased firing on us, sometimes crawling across an entire field, we finally reached Sahag Bey's. There were five or six unarmed youths in the courtyard. They had no weapons but they had come to this dangerous position in order to take places of soldiers killed in action. Two minutes before we arrived, a soldier had been killed

by a shell fragment, and another had been lightly wounded.

#### IV

#### The Defense

Aram's presence at Sahag Bey's was the salvation of the squad stationed there. Like mere boys, they danced around Aram out of sheer exuberance. They had four men killed in two hours. Eight soldiers remained from the original twelve. In two hours they had lost one third of their number! What would follow? "How many hours of daylight are left, and which of these heroes will be still alive tomorrow?" I asked myself as I shuddered.

But the boys, after being encouraged for awhile by Aram's presence, came to their senses and begged him to go downstairs in the building because he was liable to danger in this death chamber. Aram pretended not to hear them, smiled benevolently and joked with them. Just then, two shells exploded at the same time rocking the building and knocking down a large section of the roof. Some of the party were frightened, but the soldiers had been accustomed to all that. A minute later, another shell burst, but wide of its mark.

Still another shell exploded; and this time the roof trembled but remained in place.

But when the atmosphere of the room, that had been clouded with smoke at the burst of shell, cleared, we heard a low moaning in the otherwise deathly stillness. The guard who had been stationed at the loop-hole had been blown to blood-smeared bits!

Still another soldier was wounded and pinned helplessly under a fallen beam and was panting laboriously. Still another fighter's face was pock-marked with powder-burns. Another limped painfully on a wounded foot.

We busied ourselves trying to help these stricken men; and while we were so occu-

pied, still another shell burst, this time, luckily enough, high away from us and consequently harmlessly. Aram now expected the worst, though fortunately he himself was not hurt. He commanded the boys to hold the lower story of the building and promised that he would send them reinforcements within the next hour. They were slightly discouraged, and they seemed to regret being in their position the defense of which had already cost them five men, as well as the wounded. We all went downstairs. Aram heartened the boys with a brief talk. He kissed each of them separately and we parted.

We attempted fruitlessly to cross over to our other position, that at Tovmasian's, which was directly under the enemy's cross-fire, and which had been isolated from our other sectors. Vagharshag and Hrand attempted to reach it by crawling, but they were caught under a vigorous volley, and returned to us. Aram ordered communication trenches be dug to Tovmasian's position. He also promised to send unarmed workers to do the work.

We had almost reached the end of the garden when we heard the boys in the block-house we had just left singing a dancing song in contempt of the enemy's bombardment of their position. Aram's visit, which had taken but an hour, had been enough to restore their morale and to inspire them to stand up honorably before the enemy's superior forces until their last cart-ridge was gone.

When we had just about reached the headquarters of our Staff, we were met by a crowd of people who had come to congratulate Aram and the Military Council. They were led by the military band composed of students from the nearby normal school. The stormy voices and cheers were succeeded by the immortal march with its deep resolute tones of reserved sacrifice:

*"Everywhere death comes once,  
And man can die but once;  
But fortunate is he  
Who dies for his country."*

The leader of this huge mass of humanity was a hump-backed old man, Hovhanness Mgerdichian-Guloghlian, instructor of Armenian language and history in the Central School. He was one of the most faithful champions of Mgerdich Portukalian, the revolutionary instructor of Vasbouragan, and a colleague of Avedisian, Bedo and Mardig. Guloghlian had himself led the students' band followed by the tempestuous crowd—as if this were a pilgrimage to the Military Council to offer thereto solemn vows to die honorably.

After the playing of "Mer Hairenik" (Our Fatherland), Guloghlian spoke to the crowd with words vibrating with emotion.

"This is the day of life, and death, countrymen, the supreme hour to die honorably!

"Twenty years ago, in these same streets, this same enemy attempted to exterminate your fathers. But he failed because he met with their heroic resistance.

"Let that ungrateful enemy again meet with your resistance and let him perish in his own devilish plot!

"Remember '96, my countrymen! Remember the honorable death of your fathers! Follow the examples of your peerless leaders, Vramian and Ishkhan. Vow that you will not betray their ideals! Vow that you will die honorably.

"Onward to the barricades! Toward freedom! Toward immortality!"

The trembling old man ceased speaking under a shower of cheers and shouting that was swelled by the mighty passions of revenge, of hate, of the will to win. Meanwhile, the band began the "march of the Armenians," stronger and yet stronger:

*"With her brave sons' holy blood  
Will she be freed!"*

Several times each day, sometimes even hourly, the Intelligence Department sent

out circular messages to keep both the people and the soldiers informed as to the progress of the battle and the general state of affairs. On the morning of the 7th, it announced the following concerning the opening phases of the struggle:

"Turkish soldiers have fired on Armenian women coming from Sizka to the city. Our men replied. Three soldiers were killed and two mules were captured. A Turk has been killed at Khach Street and another at Urpad Brook."

The dispatches arriving from the front also reported that the Turks had two men killed near Der Tovmasian's position, a Turk had been shot near Der Nersesian's in Arark, still another near Arark Center, four before Sahag Bey's position, one before Apo's, three in Poss Ward, and one in front of Hamud Agha's house, and so on and so forth.

Our warriors captured the telegraph office with all its apparatus on the same day. As far as the Armenian losses were concerned, the Intelligence Council mentioned the names of only two warriors as being killed when the fight had started that morning.

A brief order issued on the night of the 7th read:

"Be brave. Everywhere victory is ours. The parole for the night is 'wheat.'"

Toward nightfall, the fight increased in its intensity. The guns in Haji Bekir Armory did heavy damage to one of our positions in the open plain, ruining it completely. Our fighters were obliged to dig trenches in the open field and at the same time to fire to protect themselves. Several hours later, they succeeded in getting under the nearby walls where they dug in. The guns also killed several Armenians in the nearby trenches.

The fighting became just as fierce near Khach Street where the superior forces of the Turks gained the upper hand for awhile. Not satisfied with the cannonading and the endless volleys, one of the strongest of the

Turkish positions, that in Lolo's house, succeeded in setting fire to the superb Armenian positions in the nearby Garmirmorukian house. Our fighters retreated unharmed to a secondary position in Chruantian's house close by. Garmirmorukian's house, and all the wealth it contained, was burned, but the Turks did not succeed in capturing it. The fire in that house also destroyed all the property of a Turkish commandant, Hiusni Bey, who was President of the Turkish Military Court of Van.

Hiusni Bey was that type of unusual character among the responsible Turkish government officials who really understood Jevdet and the criminal designs of the Turkish government. Exceptionally level headed and peace loving, he never lost an opportunity, in spite of his position and office, to check at least a part of Jevdet's crimes. Before the war and especially during the mobilization period, he became intimate with Aram for whom he showed boundless respect and admiration. He aided Aram and Vramian at every opportunity. Although he knew that Jevdet intended to massacre all the Armenians, he remained in the Armenian section until the end, and paid no heed to Jevdet's threats. Before the fighting started, he and his wife and daughter took refuge in the house of the Italian Consul Sbordoni. During the fighting and the period of freedom, he always enjoyed the particular respect of the Armenians both in Van and in the Caucasus.

• • •

During the same time, the Turks set fire to all the massive Armenian houses along the length of Khach Street, which had been left undefended.

The fire soon spread to St. Jacob's ward, a little way off, where St. Jacob's Church was looted and burned down, as were nearly all the houses. The people of St. Jacob's and Khach Wards had succeeded in saving with part of their goods and furniture to

the American and German Quarters and to other safe wards.

Those fires, burning at twilight, created great confusion among the non-combatants who were misinformed of the entire situation. The fighting front was more important than anything else, and heretofore, in spite of heavy losses, our soldiers had unshakingly held their trenches, blockhouses, and barricades, unintimidated by the ferocity showed by the enemy on the very first day of battle.

Near nightfall, a sudden dead silence, which lasted for about an hour, fell over both the Armenian and Turkish positions. Not a gun or rifle was discharged. Only the red and hopeless flame of the burning defenseless houses spread from Khach Street to St. Jacob's. From afar and deep down came a dull thunder. It was plain. It was plain that the handful of Armenians in Kaghakamech, the old city clustering about the citadel, were yet fighting. Some suspected that the Turks, having given up hope of subjugating Aikestan, were about to turn with all their ferocity on the handful of Armenians isolated in the center of the city. Aram, however, considered this mysterious silence ominous and at once commanded everyone on the positions to stand guard vigilantly and to be prepared all night for any sudden surprise attack.

He also had Sahag Bey's important position reinforced with picked fighters. He remained all night at the Military Council's headquarters and personally supervised and managed all affairs.

Aram's premonitions proved not unfounded. The half-hour silence was broken on all sides by a cannonade and rifle fire so intense that it is impossible to describe. The fire seemed to come straight from hell. Men were deafened and instinctively covered their ears so as not to hear the terrible cacaphony the like of which is let loose only once in a man's lifetime. For awhile, it seemed that it was all an illusion—that

the silence that had been succeeded reigned again—that we were merely imagining that the noise existed. But there were the bullets rattling through the treetops, the continual crash of window glass, the flashes like sheet lightning, the rockets tracing their trajectories across the skies, the brave men who had fought so courageously all day and who were now pallid and had continuous nervous convulsions in this abysmal roar.

"Plainly, it is meant to intimidate us," said Bulgarian.

"Are you sure about Sahag Bey's position?" asked Aram.

"Should we go there?"

"Go where?"

"To Sahag Bey's."

"I don't think that anything will happen. Let us wait and see."

They remained silent while the terrible noises of the attack raged higher and higher. But then there was heard an incongruous sound—the well known song—which seemed, in actuality, to be sung by the mouths of cannon:

*"Amenain degh mahe mi e"*

*(Everywhere death comes but once)*

"What a racket!" says someone.

A runner enters. He is from Sahag Bey's.

"What has happened, boy?" ask Aram and Bulgarian in one breath.

"Nothing, sir. Panos and his comrades send their respects. Our ruined positions have been rebuilt, and the boys are singing and asking how you are enjoying the fun."

"How many of you have been killed?"

"Not one. The Turks want to frighten us, but we are not the ones to be frightened! They were ordered to use only stone shot instead of shells. We are not asses like the Turk!"

We all laughed, and an optimistic, joyful disposition took hold of all of us.\*

But this optimistic feeling did not reign, unfortunately, among the non-combatants.

\* From the author's diary; April 8, 1915

Part of them, terrified by this tremendous bombardment and always remembering Jevdet's threats, believed for a while that he would see to it that he would succeed at any cost in "not leaving one stone upon another in all Aikestan within twenty-four hours."

In their madness, some tried to take refuge in the American and the German Quarters. Some fell in the streets and gardens from stray bullets. The more pessimistic thought that this bombardment would be followed by an overpowering direct onslaught against which even a heroic resistance would be powerless to stand up. But fortunately all these suspicions and fears did not materialize, thanks to the superhuman efforts of the fighters defending Van.

The Turks opened a vigorous fire and at the same time violently attacked our most distant position in the plain. According to witnesses "it was possible to read and write all night by the light given out by the flash of the firearms." This position, however, was manned by the best warriors of the A.R.F.: Alex Barsamian, Haroutune Lordo, Khachig Khranian, Mihran Khranian, Gregor Bazigian, and others.

\* \* \*

At midnight, the Turks attempted to break through to Sahag Bey's and Tovmasian's, but met the fierce resistance of the defending warriors and fled, leaving many dead and wounded in the streets.

A like violent attack began on our twin positions in Khach Street, but again without results.

Only our Shahbenderian position at the Hainguzes, which was between two fires, was deserted for a short time. But a little later, the warriors from the other positions, considering that desertion was dishonorable, impetuously rushed the Turkish soldiers with hand grenades, and recaptured the site.

The Turks continued this ferocious fire all night without pausing for a moment.

Gradually, however, as the separate positions began to communicate with one another and received commands from the Military Council, they all recovered their composure; and the previous dampening of their ardor now gave way to high spirits. In order to show their contempt for the enemy's terrorizing attempts and to cheer themselves, every one now took up the chorus of revolutionary songs. By command of the Military Council, the Student Band went from one position to the other through the dangerous streets, playing "Mer Hairenik."

Some very important work, meanwhile, was being accomplished. Twenty or thirty workmen gathered on that very terrible night went to the most important positions to erect new ramparts in place of those destroyed by the day's bombardment, and to dig communication trenches from position to position. Joseph Kuydumjian, a Ramgavar teacher, boldly and successfully managed the work of recruiting and utilizing those laborers in what might be termed his corps of engineers.

On the morning of the 8th, the Military Council made the following announcement to the people in order to calm their fears and to show the reason for the tremendous bombardment of the previous night:

"Compatriots:

"All of last night's cannonading and the hundreds of thousands of bullets wasted by the enemy were intended only to frighten our people. We have not had a single loss and not a single position of ours has been deserted. Our men did not even condescend to return the enemy's fire. There is no need for panic."

On April 8, the fighting continued with unabated intensity. The Turks again dragged their cannon into the open and kept up a continuous fire. Four or five citizens, among them women and children, were killed in the streets, for the most part as a result of their own carelessness.

Kachig Nazliu, an old time Dashnag vol-

unteer, was killed at the front. The most stubborn fighting took place near the Hain-guzes, Khach Street, and Arark. A violent and almost hand to hand fight occurred at Shabbenderian's position. On the night of the 7th, the Turks succeeded in capturing that isolated outpost; but several hours later, our soldiers from other positions succeeded in recapturing it.

On the 8th, the Turks rushed that post and forced our warriors to relinquish it once again. Subsequently, a group of our fighters attempted to regain possession of it, entered the building and fought hand to hand with the enemy. The Turks showered the Armenian soldiers with shot and shell, while our men hurled hand grenades among them and used their Mauser pistols as machine guns. Though the Turks finally triumphed here, they paid a dear price, leaving more than ten corpses in front of Shabbenderian's position. Two gunners were also killed. We lost two soldiers, both natives of Vozmeh.

The Turkish military police who had taken refuge in the English consulate building fought stubbornly and fiercely. Due to their superior position, they spread fire on all our wards, gardens, streets and positions. Communications between our position were, for the most part, interrupted.

Realizing the strategic value of the consular position, the Turks attempted during the entire day of April 8 to place new forces therein. For that reason, they attacked our sector every two hours. On our side, Gregor Bulgarian, Kevork Chideshian, and Nishan Jamakordzian were preparing in secret to set fire to the consular building. By piercing the wall, they succeeded in getting a portable pump into the building in preparation to pumping kerosene through a large hose onto the wooden parts of the structure.

Word had been sent previously to our positions on both flanks (to Tovmasian's, Maksabedian's, Khorozian's) to stand ready

to shoot down the Turks as they ran away through the streets. The liquid fire detail now began to squirt kerosene on the walls and on the lower windows in such a manner that the Turks did not notice what was going on. They then ignited the place with hand grenades and rifle fire. The Turks, seeing the sudden flames, fled from the house, though constantly firing away.

Just at that moment, new reinforcements came up the opposite street. Our positions, meanwhile, had opened fire on them. Guerilla Captain Nishan of Kordzot (a Hunchagian who commanded the Yavrumian-Maksabedian position) showed extraordinary boldness by coming out into the streets and pursuing the Turks. Many of the Turks were shot down in the thoroughfare, and about twenty more were killed in the building.

The burning of the consular building, which revenged the levelling of Garmirmorukian's house on the 7th, caused great rejoicing among our people. The destruction of that key position allowed a dozen of our blockhouses to draw a freer breath of air.

In order to reward and encourage the soldiers who had shown the greatest valor during the fighting of the 7th and 8th, the Military Council decorated them with a Cross of Honor and a Tricolor Ribbon.

The following were among those decorated for the fighting on the 7th:

1. Alex Barsamian, Dashnag, Guerilla Captain of our position at Dardanelle, and Commander of the Arark Sector.
2. Melikset Einatian, Dashnag, Commander of the Sector from Khach Street to the Hainguzes.
3. Misak, Dashnag, Guerilla Captain.
4. Armenag Tokmanian, Dashnag.
5. Dikran Yazjian, Dashnag.
6. Panos Jamgochian, Dashnag, Commander of the Sahag Bey Sector.
7. Nazareth Burnutian, Ramgavar, Guerilla Captain, who captured the Shabbenderian position.
8. Nishan of Kordzot.

Crosses of Honor were given to many others who showed appreciable valor during the siege.

The several day's fighting opened a wide field of responsibility before the Military Council. It was obliged to supply not only weapons but also food, and to carry on its purely military activities—making dispensations here or there, looking after the guard, strengthening positions, looking after military communications, safeguarding peace and order among the people, rationing the supplies, and doing a thousand other important things. At the same time, it directed the tremendously intense battle.

Workers were needed. The damage caused by Turkish guns was not as light as had been imagined. Several hours' bombardment had destroyed completely even the most solid blockhouse. All our positions had been bombarded and ruined, and we had to build new ones at once or face the unpleasant certainty of being rushed and overpowered by overwhelming numbers. Some blockhouses were destroyed completely several times a day and quickly rebuilt as many times.

It became urgently necessary, especially in the plains and the eastern gardens, to dig communication ditches.

Engineering activities had been almost ignored at the beginning of the battle. But the first two days had shown that they were supremely vital. To its credit, the Military Council quickly and successfully organized a corps of engineers.

It established a separate headquarters for its laborers, under the independent supervision of Shavarsh Hovivian (Ramgavar) and Azad Khoenian, a Dashnag teacher. Another station was also established to supply them with the necessary tools and facilities. In response to the requests of the Military Council, all classes of people cordially contributed all kinds of useful tools. All kinds of master artisans flocked to the place, especially wreckers and masons. The

first group was ordered to dig communication trenches and set fire to the enemy's blockhouses; the latter outfit was to repair those of our blockhouses which had been damaged by shells.

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All classes of men, and above all those who were unaccustomed to the use of arms, voluntarily filled the ranks of the engineers. A certain number of them were city folk—merchants, shopkeepers, laborers, but the greater number were peasants. Afterwards, as the fighting progressed, their number increased to eight hundred. They furnished the bulk of our casualties because they were open to Turkish shrapnel and bullets and were frequently called upon to work under entirely unsafe circumstances.

The role of these engineers was fateful and heroic during the entire siege of Van. The enormous trenches they dug, the strong and immovable ramparts they built, best enabled our soldiers to surrender not a foot of ground and not a single blockhouse, during the course of the siege. Frequently, an entire line of positions were destroyed six or seven times a day only to be rebuilt quickly by the efforts of these skillful and self-denying workers.

The Ordnance Council had assumed the task of provisioning the battalion of engineers.

In order to determine the number of able bodied men who wanted to fight, but who did not have the necessary arms, the Military Council delivered the following announcement on the 8th:

"Let those who want weapons with which to fight, apply to the Military Council."

On the same day, an enormous crowd of men of all ages who wished to be listed and to be given arms, jammed the area in front of the Staff headquarters. After a perfunctory selection, the volunteers were distributed to perform, for the most part, sentinel duty. Only a very few of them were given arms.

The Military Council followed these dispositions with this order:

"Comrades:

"Write out your requisitions briefly and plainly. Endeavour to learn everything that goes on, and inform us as quickly as possible in writing, always over the signature of your officer. Designate time and place. No attention will be paid to oral dispatches. Officers will be held responsible for misleading information.

"Send back all spades and picks left in your position. Do not fire uselessly. Every bullet discharged must reach its target. Those who waste cartridges will be severely reprimanded and punished. Return all empty brass.

"The excessive use of whisky or wine is absolutely forbidden. You must never blaspheme the enemy's religion."

*"Military Council"*

The fighting continued on the 9th with the same ferocity which characterized that of the first two days. In Arark Sector, our soldiers took the enemy by surprise and carried his position. Unable to withstand their assault, the enemy fled, leaving behind him a respectable supply of ammunition. In retaliation, the battalion of Turks on the northern side of the Hainguz River opened a vigorous fire and attempted to rush our positions. An hour's fighting did not bring them any success, and they finally withdrew, leaving several dead. Comparatively small local combats occurred at various positions at the same time.

The Turks in Hamud Agha Armory opened an intense fire on our positions. During this engagement, two Turkish incendiaries attempted to advance on one of our positions to set it on fire; but these men were shot down before they came near it.

At the Toprak Kaleh sector, a clever Turkish irregular put his hat on a stone and then withdrew to watch our men expend ammunition shooting at it. A twelve year Armenian orphan from the German orphan-

age crawled up the hill under a barrage of rifle fire, reached and secured the hat, and returned to our lines unharmed.

\* \* \*

On the northeast, nearly opposite the middle of our sector, stood the large Hamud Agha Armory which was more threatening than any of the other positions of the enemy. Our positions that stood next to it were in mortal danger, because that Armory dominated them, and its fire struck in all directions. The armory was manned by Jevdet's boldest and most experienced and expert irregulars.

The Turks in that position fired at our loopholes that were three or four inches in diameter; and through repeated fire at these targets, succeeded often in converting these small apertures into openings as large as windows. But the most dangerous aspect of it all was the armory's communication with another Turkish armory, having two large cannon, on the northern shore of the Hainguz River, and its intercourse with the massive houses standing beside it and which dominated the gardens of eastern Aikestan.

Under these dispositions, the capture of all Aikestan, or at least an important position thereat, seemed to be a mere matter of days. At the price of slight losses and with a little more boldness, the Turks could rush us under the protection of their cannon.

Both Aram and the Military Council were worried about this danger. The attempt to carry the armory by assault might cost us dearly, not only in lives, but also in the successful consummation of the over-all military plan. Every warrior and every cartridge had been counted and listed. The loss of a warrior or a cartridge would be vitally felt. On the other hand, about sixty of our best soldiers were standing guard, inactive but sleepless, in that sector and not doing any perceptible harm to the enemy. Last of all, every native Armenian of Aikestan had a deep rooted fear and hatred of the Hamud Agha Armory. He considered

it to be the stronghold and symbol of Turkish oppression. Its destruction would not only be of the greatest military advantage, but would fill all anxious souls with the wine of victory, and would drive them to make new and needed sacrifices, and to perform bravely.

The principal exponent of the plan to destroy the armory was found in Krikor Bulgarian. Modest and retiring, always sunk in introspection and in the cogitation of practical plans, he had determined at the beginning of the battle to destroy that armory. He explained his project to Aram during the course of some brief conversations. Obtaining the latter's approval, he began to work, stubbornly, fiercely. He secured the services of several able and trustworthy master-miners from the engineer battalion. Informing only the captain, and the Sector Commander Melikset Einiatian, he set his miners to work in the cellar of a blockhouse that stood only five or six hundred paces from the armory. He had to dig a tunnel under the armory without attracting anyone's attention, place the necessary amount of dynamite under the four corners of that gigantic building, set the fuse, leave the tunnel, and await the destruction of the fort. Bulgarian completed the work in forty-eight hours working unceasingly and warily, patiently but doggedly. He found time, moreover, to emerge from his tunnel to supervise personally the burning of the English consulate building. He found time, too, to visit our various positions and to satisfy their requisitions. He also took part in the session of the Military Council. But his fullest attention was concentrated on the operations at Hamud Agha Armory, and he frequently was found in the tunnel.

The tunnel, at long last, had been driven beneath the armory. It was now important to determine the ground plan, and the position of the foundations, in order to place the dynamite correctly. Krikor accomplish-

ed this task with the utmost precision. Everything was ready; it remained only to place the dynamite and to light the fuses. When his master-sappers evinced some fear and refused to remain in the tunnel, Krikor, smiling and cool, sent them back and lighted all the fuses himself; and leisurely whistling a melody, he returned to the Armenian position through the dark and twisting passages of the tunnel. There was nothing to do now but wait. Approximate computations had it that the fuses would burn for half an hour.

That slow and anxious period of time passed slowly. Suddenly, there was a tremendous roar! The mine had exploded! Shouts and laughter came from the Turks in the armory, and then a shrill and mocking voice taunted:

"Hey Armenians! Your bomb turned out to be useless!"

Dejected, our soldiers nevertheless replied without full faith in their retort:

"You'll hear from it tomorrow!"

Krikor himself was the least discouraged. "That's nothing," he said to the disheartened captain. "We don't know the whole story yet. Part of the dynamite may have been spoiled, or we may have buried it deeper than was necessary. At any rate, we will have to keep a sharp guard all night. After all, we can make new attempts.

And slapping the shoulder of the sector commander, he took off to think the whole business over. The night progressed without any rifle fire or assaults.

It was twelve o'clock of a starless and moonless night. Suddenly, all of northeastern Aikestan was inundated by red and fierce flames, and the sky became laden with clouds that were the color of blood and flame. Bullets began to whine everywhere like imps from hell. Amidst the din of the cacaphony, everyone was shouting a refrain: "Hamud Agha's Armory is burning!"

The dynamite, in truth, had done its work; Krikor's prediction had been entirely

fulfilled. His only mistake had been to bury too deeply the dynamite for caution's sake. It had caused only a light explosion, but had thrown sparks into the hay stored in the cellar; and little by little, the entire building had been ignited. After smouldering for many hours, the fire had reached the flooring of the first story by midnight, and then had leaked through the entire armory.

After first attempting to extinguish the conflagration, but seeing that the armory was ablaze on all four sides, the Turks finally deemed it the better part of valor to get out of there and run. A number of recklessly courageous irregulars, undismayed, remained in the building, fought to the last breath, and were buried beneath the debris. About twenty or thirty of the soldiers were shot down as they ran pell-mell through Shabbenderian's garden.

Intoxicated with victory, our fighters began to go beyond the planned bounds. They sprang out of their trenches and blockhouses to chase the enemy across the open plain and on the Hainguz Hills. Sector Commander Melikset Eination and Guerilla Captain Hovhannes Zaparian pursued them as far as the heights of Toprak Kaleh. There they were engaged in a dangerous position by larger Turkish forces, but a peremptory command obliged the intrepid pair to return.

In their delirium, the Armenians, at dawn, first set fire to the large three-story houses near the Hamud Agha Armory, and plundered everything found within. Most of the booty was taken to the stores of the Ordnance Council, and the rest to our nearby positions. Among the captured goods, there were recognized certain articles which had been stolen by the Turks of the Hamud Agha ward from the Armenians during the looting of Van in 1896. An aged crone weepingly implored a soldier to let her "lift even a straw or a twig from Hamud Agha's house in return for the uncounted wealth that had been robbed from her in

'96; and so that the curse she had pronounced upon his head at that time might be fulfilled!"

Joyful demonstrations were held at night in our positions, our wards, and our houses, at the Military Council, and even in the American and German Quarters to celebrate the destruction of the armory. In the morning, a crowd jammed the open space before Headquarters and shouted its appreciation. The band celebrated over the still smouldering fort with gay songs; and after playing "Mer Hairenik" over its ruins, made a triumphal tour of all our positions.

The victory announcement of the Military Council went like this:

"We have stood proud and unshaken during the heroic struggle which we have been waging for four days against the cowardly enemy and his bullets and shells, and that rabble's desperate religious frenzy.

"From Ayish Oghlu to Arark, to Khach Street, and thence to the remains of Hamud Agha's position, the stronghold of despotism, our soldiers have stood resolute and victorious. They are not afraid to look death squarely in its face.

"We are not intimidated either by the numerical superiority of the enemy, or by the realization that we shall die sooner or later. We want to enjoy death in its most divine form. In this world-wide struggle of nations, we wish to show that the Armenian nation, the centuries-old oak of the East, knows how to die with its weapons grasped in its hands—but yet dies above the countless losses and the burning ruins of its enemy.

"Armenian people:

"This battle has been begun and we will see it through to the finish—until the last drop of blood is spent or until the final downfall of our enemy.

"Armenian nation be brave! Victory is ours!

"Everyone here has his share of work—everyone, old people and children, women

and girls. Let them fight side by side with our soldiers and share the work among themselves.

"This battle is not only a struggle for our existence, but a struggle for truth and justice. Let everybody struggle to make truth triumphant.

"Take courage and be strong; and let us cling to silent and creative endeavour in order to pave the way to newer victories.

"Look at all times with admiration upon the enemy's smouldering armories and great losses.

"Look with admiration upon the heroic resistance of our soldiers and prepare for the *days to come* with hope and labor so that you may see the DAY of liberation of the Armenian Nation and its New Resurrection.

"Long live the Armenian soldiery!

Long live the Armenian nation!"

*"The Military Council*

April 10, Van—Aikestan."

\* \* \*

After we had destroyed Hamud Agha's Armory on the 10th, the Turks vigorously attacked on several points of our line after artillery overtures. Shells hailed down upon our positions unsparingly. But our people did not become panic-stricken as they had at a previous time, while our soldiers had long ago learned to scorn the shells and the onslaughts. At any rate, the enemy's offensive of the 10th gave him not an inch of ground, let alone a blockhouse. He met everywhere the iron resistance of our soldiers and was repulsed severely. Our losses during the entire day were ridiculously small when contrasted with the vigor expended in the Turkish assault.

As exceptions, however, several women and children were mowed down by chance shells in the streets, and five or six engineers were killed in their positions.

To counter the bombardment and the attacks aimed at Sahag Bey's and Tovmasian's, our liquid-fire squads cleverly ignited

and destroyed several Turkish positions that stood near the former position. A native of Van, Dikran by name, and popularly known as "Varjabed" or "Teacher," distinguished himself in the business of liquid-firing. All of his attempts were completely successful and were fully surprising to the Turks among whom was created great terror.

Dikran used a specially constructed portable pump to squirt liquid-fire on the Turkish blockhouses. First piercing the target wall, Dikran would fit the pump to the aperture, and then pump kerosene on the enemy position. He would then ignite it by throwing through the hole a burning brand or by shooting through it. Our sappers also employed a like technique. After getting the tunnel under the enemy's position, our sappers would suddenly break through the flooring, spread the liquid fire, and escape again through the tunnel.

The liquid fire not only spread great terror among the enemy, but frequently caused him a great loss of manpower; and, more often than not, the Turk was forced to retire to safer locale. It frequently interrupted the communications between their separate positions, and particularly their most important positions. Aside from all this, panic stricken from the unexpected burning of their position, the Turks often abandoned all kinds of material, and especially their "blue birds"—that is, their rifles and ammunition. The sector commanders customarily planned the use of the liquid fire and nearly always had the immediate advice and direction of Krikor Bulgarian. Towards the end, liquid fire became a separate arm of our army and specialists in this type of warfare were organized into distinct companies.

Dikran, the Teacher, Kevork Chidesian, Chairman of the Political Assembly, and Nishan Jamakordzian distinguished themselves in these companies. Their incendiaryisms caused exceptional rejoicing particular-

ly among the non-combatants who always liked brilliant displays. When the burnings took place at night, they were particularly elated and the impression was like that of a holiday. Meanwhile, the band played our national march which irritated the enemy to the point of madness.

The daily reports revealed that the Turks had suffered heavy losses on the 10th, 11th, and 12th. The men in Tovmasian's position killed twelve Turkish riflemen and one gunner. Chavush Bashis killed six soldiers. The Tiutiunjian and Shan Ward positions each killed two apiece. The enemy also left some dead in Haji Bekir Armory, at Vizviz, Khach Street, in Shahbenderian's position which we recaptured after destroying Hamud Agha's Armory.

On the 12th, we burned Hamzo's position which was directly opposite Sahag Bey's blockhouse. The enemy ran from these positions leaving several corpses. We burned and captured several positions in the Arark Sector; the enemy left four dead. The pitiless bombardment of Shahbenderians' position and the Arark Sector on the 12th, did not cause the loss of any of our men.

From the beginning of the battle until now—that is, from the 7th to the 13th—Tovmasian's position had remained isolated and left to its own fate. It did not have any means of intercourse or even of communication with our other positions or with headquarters.

The most desperate and heroic fighting in all Aikestan took place at that position. All the efforts of the garrison in the blockhouse and their companions to make contact with each other were defeated by the peculiar advantages of the enemy's position. The handful of inexperienced soldiers could only grit their teeth and think of some scheme, endure hunger and privation, nurse

their ammunition, and fight until the last breath.

"When we came out into the open world after being invested for six days on end," recounted one of those soldiers, "everything seemed like a dream to us.

"We thought that all Aikestan had been ruined like our blockhouse. It was strange to see houses standing, men fighting, and still hoping for the best, children playing in the most carefree manner possible, and women and old folk, who had not forgotten their God, making their prayers."

"During the six days, the enemy fired ten thousands of bullets upon our positions, and at an average sent over a hundred shells. I don't know how we endured it and how we fought back. Our number? There were only nine of us and all inexperienced. Some of us were using a gun for the first time in our lives. One or two of us had gone to Varak for what we called "military training." But that wasn't the trouble, because we learned how to fight during the first hour of the battle. But you need cartridges with which to fight—and that was our trouble right there. We had to match our stinginess with bullets against the wastefulness of the enemy. At the beginning of the battle, each of us had nearly a hundred and fifty cartridges. After fighting for six days, we yet had forty or fifty rounds per person.

This company was freed from the siege on the night of the sixth day of the battle when a trench driven from beside Sahag Bey's reached its blockhouse.

Tovmasian's was destroyed and rebuilt more than ten times. During the last days of the battle, an entirely new structure—an original type of blockhouse—stood in sight over the foundations of the former beautiful urban dwelling.

*(To be continued)*

## CLASSIC BOOKS IN SERIAL FORM

## SAMUEL

A Historical Novel  
of Armenia 366-400 A. D.

By Raffi

Translated from the Original Armenian

## BOOK ONE

## CHAPTER VII

## The Pretense

The next morning, although the hour was late, Samuel had not yet left his sleeping chamber. Having returned at a very late hour from his interview of the previous night with Moushegh, it was almost dawn when he retired. His servant Houssig had already several times approached the sleeping room, and cautiously putting his ear against the keyhole, had listened to the heavy breathing and the groans of his master.

"Can it be that he is sick?" he murmured finally, and his bright countenance became clouded with a veil of deep sorrow. As he stepped out of the room, there entered an emaciated old man. Through his beard and snow-white hair there peered a sallow cold face which, with its deeply-edged lines, betokened an energetic and powerful character. Why he had come in, perhaps he himself did not know, but he soon found plenty to busy himself. He approached this or

that object in the room, scrutinized each critically, moved and transposed them, and rearranged them carefully. Then he walked over to the lances which rested in the corners, made replacements and adjustments, inspected each, ran his fingers over their keen tips, and thus carried on. He was amid these preoccupations when young Houssig reentered the room, and holding him by the hand, cried, "What business of yours is it? Have you come here to disarrange the room?"

"Silence, you pup!" rejoined the old man as he pushed the lad with such force that, had he not been agile as a cat, he would have sprawled on his haunches.

"Take it easy, dear Arpak," warned the youth, "our master is still asleep."

"He's asleep!" repeated the old man mockingly. "If he's asleep he will awake. Who sleeps at this hour?"

And as a matter of fact the noise in the reception room awakened Samuel.

Old Arpak was Samuel's childhood guardian and tutor who had carried him in his arms and this fact accounted for his extraordinary intimacy. He was an old soldier with the clean, coarse heart of a soldier who had preserved the freshness and the resilience of his former sturdy qualities. Samuel respected this man, his old age, and imperishable valor. Even at this advanced age, his arrow never missed the mark, and whatever his hand touched it was crowned with success. From early childhood he had taught Samuel the science of hunting and the science of fighting, he had taught him to run, to hurdle a deep chasm, to race with the horse, and to break a wild steed, to aim the arrow and to pierce the steely armor. He had made these experiments on bronze planks, and by practicing it on animals; he had taught him how to behead a man with one stroke of the sword, or how to cleave him in twain. He had inured him against hunger and thirst and had taught him to sleep in wide open spaces without a bed. In short, he had perfected him in all the drills which were the customary requisites in the education and the training of princes' sons in order to whip them into a good man and a good soldier. Samuel's tutor's moral code was very simple. It included a few basic rules, such as, not to tell a lie, to honor his word, to be merciful toward the weak, loyalty to the king and the fatherland, and to be frugal and temperate. Samuel's broader moral and spiritual education had been committed to private instructors who taught him religion, the languages, and liberal arts. These instructors were generally invited from the neighboring Monastery of Ashtishat.

Arpak was a very modest man who preferred that others did the talking about him; but sometimes when his listeners were willing, he was not loath to mention in the most casual manner the nobility of his an-

cestry, saying, "they didn't exactly find me in the gutter." Often he was wont to speak of that particular battle in which the Persians had cut off the advance of Julian by destroying the Euphrates bridge, while he and his Armenian kinsmen warriors had repelled the Persians, thus clearing Julian's path. "Ah, if only I had known Julian was such a base man!" he would sigh bitterly. Whenever someone recounted the exploits in some particular battle, he would invariably reply, "Ah, those days, when we were fighting near the Euphrates," and again he would start relating the story of the bridge. He could never forget nor forgive the behavior of the Apostate emperor toward his king Tiran, which ended in the execution of a powerful Armenian patriarch.

Samuel came out of his sleeping chamber, and seeing Arpak, he greeted him, saying, "Good morning, Arpak, what news do you bring today?"

"Good morning, Samuel, and how have you been?" replied Arpak as he seated himself on the rug. He disliked sitting on the sofa which he regarded as a ridiculous custom. "It's like sitting on a wooden horse which never moves," he was wont to comment.

"You've done well by coming, Arpak," Samuel said, "I want to go hunting this morning."

The old man smiled as he replied, "Look at the man who wants to go hunting. Is this a time to get up? Look how high is the sun."

The old tutor's rebuke was in point. Samuel was never accustomed to get up so late; secondly, it was always the custom to go hunting before sunrise. But Samuel tried to justify himself by explaining that he had gone to bed late, that he had an uncomfortable night, and that only toward morning he had fallen asleep. But Arpak would not be convinced. He persisted in his opinion that the young man who could not sleep all night was invariably up to some devilry,

and that, in his opinion, was very unbecoming in a young man. Too, he was wont to look on Samuel as a mere child who often forgot to wipe off his nose with the handkerchief which his mother had given him. He could never reconcile himself with the thought that the child had grown up, that he was a man now, with the full possession of his will and personal desires. And although Samuel long since had outlived his tutorship, but as a matter of pure respectfulness, he sometimes turned to him for counsel. Whenever this happened, the old man became very exacting in his demands.

Finally, yielding to the solicitations of his protegee, he said, "now that you're going, I will order the red horse made ready for you."

"Why the red horse? You know very well that I like the white horse," Samuel countered.

"The white is not yet ready for riding," replied Arpak, like a man who was experienced, "that scoundrel, as you see, has no intentions of coming to his senses, he will cause you trouble some day."

Samuel accepted the old man's judgment, insisting only that no more than two squires and two dogs be included in the hunting party. But even that mild request seemed odd to Arpak who was very meticulous in the arrangement of his hunting parties. Whenever Samuel went hunting, he was accompanied by ten to twenty horsemen and as many dogs. Only a few days before, he had invited the sons of several nobles to join with him in the chase. Finally, he had always made prior arrangements as to the specific locale of the hunt, and had been a stickler for the closest details relative to the sport. But, lo and behold, Samuel was in a reverse mood this morning and wanted to proceed with only two horsemen. What would people think? Wouldn't that seem rather odd? But Samuel quieted the old man's uneasiness by remarking that he only wanted some light excursion, rather than

serious hunting, because he was not feeling very well and wanted to amuse himself for a short while.

The inmates of the fortress of course knew of the imminent return of the Sparapet, although without the full details which the two messengers had brought the previous night. Samuel was anxious to learn the old man's precise reactions to that rumor.

"Do you know, Arpak, that my father is coming as the Sparapet of the Armenians?"

To this the old man, instead of replying, took his hand to his head, and rubbed his forehead, as if reluctant to make a reply.

"Well, why don't you say something?"

"It smells bad," replied the plain-spoken old man, as he rubbed his head more vigorously.

"Now, now, is that a thing to say, Arpak?" Samuel asked with a feigned air of being offended.

The old man took his hand to his white beard. "Each hair of this beard has turned gray in some peril, Samuel, I've seen much, and I've attempted many things."

He said nothing more, but his doleful face spoke volumes. The old man of course was not aware of the criminal contract between Samuel's father and King Sapor, but he was greatly disturbed by such hazy questions as why the office of Sparapet of the Armenians had been offered to Samuel's father when, by the law of the land, it belonged to his elder brother Vasak, or by what right the Persian king interfered in affairs which were the sole prerogative of the Armenian king?

"I would be very happy if our master returned from Ctesiphon with his king, rather than with Meroujan Ardzouni," and with these words the old man slammed the door behind him, as he left the room in a mood of violent temper.

Samuel was visibly shaken by Arpak's parting shot. "One can only imagine the extent of the mourning which will fill the fortress," he pondered, "when the real truth

becomes known. With the exception of my mother, no one will be pleased with the conduct of my father. He will bring in his train only turmoil, war, envy, and hatred."

Houssig, who was standing all this time, had listened to the conversation of the two men intently. The lad had neither Arpak's white beard nor his experience, but he was wise enough to realize that something was amiss. Instead of being happy over the news of his father's return, Houssig's master was depressed and moody. This morning in particular, he was in a black mood. Samuel noticed the youth's sadness and asked him gently:

"What's the matter, Houssig, why are you so silent?"

The youth looked around cautiously, and advancing a few steps, said in a scarcely audible voice, "My Lord, do you know what I have learned?"

"What have you learned?" Samuel asked, all ears.

"That man came to visit our Lady again last night."

"What man?"

"The courier who had brought our Master's letter."

"Who told you this?"

"She told me."

"Nevart?"

"Yes, Nevart. She told me that late last night the eunuch Pakos ushered him into Milady's chambers. She had been sitting, waiting. They immediately barred all the doors and quickly entered into a lengthy conversation."

"What were they talking about?"

"Nevart could not hear everything because they were speaking in whispers, but through the crack she saw Milady pass over to the courier several letters, telling him he had many places to visit, many countries to traverse, and many men to see. The letters which she entrusted to him had to be delivered to their addresses as soon as possible."

"Did Nevart, by any chance, catch the names of the men or the places?"

"I asked Nevart about that too, but since they were unfamiliar names she could not remember them. All she could get was that Milady commanded the courier to use all haste in delivering the letters, and urged him to see all of them within two weeks."

"Didn't she remember at least one name?"

"Come to think of it, she remembered one name. Milady instructed him to visit first of all one Varaztad, the high priest of the 'Sons of the Sun.'"

Samuel paled hearing this name. That name alone was enough to give him an idea of the deep plot now being woven by his mother. Sun worship still persisted in the region of Taron. Its followers called themselves "Sons of the Sun." They were Armenians by descent, but fearing the persecution of Christian Armenians, they pretended to be Christians while secretly practicing the ancient religion, and as an oppressed minority, they were always ready to revolt at the first opportunity. And now the opportune moment had come. Lady Mami-konian, the Mistress of Taron, was sending word to their High Priest, inviting him to support the movement. Her husband, the Lord of Taron, was returning from Ctesiphon to destroy Christianity, bringing with him the Persian sun-worship. Who else could welcome such a thing with open arms, if not the sons of the sun? Moreover, their numbers in the Province of Taron, and especially within the Mesopotamian border, was not inconsiderable. It was obvious that the soil was ready for the dissemination of the seeds of discord and internal war. All that was only too clear for Samuel.

That morning his mother's courier set out to meet the High Priest of the Sons of the Sun, while Samuel, under the pretext of hunting, prepared to leave for the Monastery of Ashishat, the Mother Church of Armenia, where the forces of Christianity were concentrated. He was leaving to warn

the local heads of the coming danger, and to urge them to arouse the Christian population. This was a contest between the representatives of two kindred factions. It was a contest to the death. The initiative of one was being supplied by the mother, the other, by the son.

Samuel dressed himself in his light armor, and accompanied by his servant Houssig, proceeded to the stables, a pretentious mansion solely for the use of the prince's steeds, the hunting dogs, and the falcons. Having been advised by the servants of the court of the prince's approach, the Stablemaster hastened to meet him, and when at a respectable distance, he came to a halt and bowed deeply.

"Good morning, Zaven," the Prince greeted.

The stablemaster again bowed deeply. Meanwhile, the servants had brought out from his stall the red steed, covered with a beautiful blanket the edges of which were adorned with many-colored, woolen tassels. A powerful stableman was holding the bridle, but the restless animal kept up his pranks with his groom, now neighing, now snorting, and now rising on his hind legs, as if eager to crush under his hooves his would-be tyrant. The stableman controlled the mighty animal with a firm hand while the surrounding spectators took great delight in the hazardous contest. Arpak, who had just appeared, approached the animal, and patted him gently, "easy Red, why don't you be quiet?"

Samuel, who had been watching the steed's antics, now approached Arpak and said, "you forbade me to mount the white steed today, but this red is not more sensible."

"Red is making this fuss out of sheer joy," Arpak replied, as he ordered the attendants to walk the horse around a bit

until he quieted down for the saddling.

The stable proper was divided into several compartments. One section housed the Prince's mules, another, the donkeys, another, the common horses, and this particular one, the steeds. Preceded by the stablemaster, Samuel directed his steps toward the latter section.

They entered a long lane, the end of which could scarcely be seen. Here, in separate stalls, were lined up not less than one hundred steeds, sleek, healthy, one more beautiful than the other. Each animal was kept in his crib by two forged iron chains. To prevent the more unruly ones from kicking each other, their hind hooves were firmly chained. Samuel walked behind each animal, examining each horse with the peculiar satisfaction which he experienced whenever he inspected his mounts. He knew the name, the age, the pedigree, and the nature of each horse, and every now and then he asked the stablemaster a question which was answered with distinct delight and pride. When Samuel stopped to caress some, the stablemaster was thrilled no end, just like an affectionate mother who is thrilled when someone caresses her lovely offspring.

"I think it is time, Zaven, to exercise the horses more often," Samuel said, "we may have need of them soon."

"I understand, Milord," the stablemaster said, with the trace of a smile on his hairy face. "The Great Prince is coming home and you wish to meet him."

"Quite right, and with a great entourage."

"I was aware of that, and for that reason I had planned to begin the exercises today. Henceforth they shall have several hours of daily exercise."

When Samuel stepped out, his horse was saddled and ready. He mounted the animal and took to the road.

## Chapter VIII

## The Hunt

Equipped with quiver, a bow, and a long lance, astride his spirited red horse, Samuel galloped along the road which led to the Monastery of Ashtishat. The joyous animal was in a frisky mood. He verily kept dancing, took long leaps, and gnawed at his bridle until his mouth was covered with white foam. But he soon became tame when, as by a peculiar sense of sadness, he realized why his master did not respond to his coquetry. Other times, whenever he had gone hunting with his master, the latter had cajoled him with a thousand affectations. But today he was so silent. And that's what saddened the intelligent animal.

His finery lacked nothing to cause him grief. His head was adorned with small, rose-colored plumes, held together with bell-shaped, silver buttons. On his neck, likewise, nestled a silver collar with myriad tinsels which filled the countryside with a pleasant tintinabulation every time he shook his mane. On the lower part of his neck was a neckpiece woven in many-colored glass beads, capped with a triangular talisman which rested directly on his broad chest, which safeguarded him against the evil eye, or any evil mishap. The stirrups were of pure silver, while the saddle had a coating of leopard's skin.

Two matched greyhounds, with costly neckpieces, ran before the Prince while the rear was covered by two squires, each holding on his arm a falcon.

The attendants likewise were at sea at the Prince's reticence as he drove his horse forward, completely oblivious of his surroundings, and without showing any interest in the numerous wild animals which they encountered on the road. The road itself ran through a valley, walled by the thick forests of twin mountain ranges on either side. The sun's rays were unable to pene-

trate the thick foliage which, rising from either side, had embraced one another, thus weaving a living, green canopy. In spots, the valley broadened, opening before them vistas of verdant, velvety meadows, scintillating with many-colored blossoms.

Sweet was the distant warble of the birds, the gentle rustle of the leaves, but even more melodious was the murmur of the mountain brook which meandered through the shrubbery which lined the road. Everything exuded joy and gladness; only Samuel's heart was heavy with grief. The more he pondered the coming perils, the more it became magnified before his eyes. "Who knows?" he meditated, "perhaps the day will come when the peace of these beautiful woods will be disturbed by some impossible storm; instead of their lovely perfume, these very same flowers will breathe the stench of death, and the kin will drench these verdant valleys with the blood of his kin!"

It seemed even the wild beasts of the forest had a secret feeling that Samuel would have nothing to do with them today, and that was the reason why they passed before him with such free and bold abandon. Here was a cunning gazelle which, with the speed of lightning, bounded through the bushes, cut the road, and leaping through the trees, climbed the top of the mossy crag, and cast a disdainful eye on the Prince. The two hounds noticed his impertinence, and cast a questioning glance at their master, but when he failed to give the expected signal, they swallowed their pride and continued along their nimble way. Presently, a flock of partridges disturbed the silence with their swift flight. Like a mouse-blue hurricane, it passed very closely, and in a moment disappeared among the nearby rocks. The falcons, which until that

moment were quietly perched on the hands of the two squires, furious at the boldness of these red-billed, red-clawed birds, flapped their sharp-edged wings and made a dash for it, as if eager to tear them to pieces, but the silken cords tied to their legs restrained them.

The sun was fairly high by now, and a delicious warmth filled the forest. The copious rain of the previous day had cleansed the trees which now glistened in the finery of their verdant leaves. The grass shone with a richer green, while the moss, having grown more luxuriant, covered the nakedness of the rocks like a soft, velvety carpet.

The rain itself generally exasperated the peasant women because it washed off the sugar which nature deposited on the leaves. It destroyed the God-given manna. Fortunately, they had long since collected the harvest, and now, there appeared, here and there in the forest, small temporary shanties woven with fresh twigs. Close to these huts is seen thick cloudlets of smoke which, slowly rising, dissipate themselves into the air. Red-bloused village girls, red-veiled young brides, like colorful butterflies, flutter around the fires. There is a huge cauldron on the fire, filled with sugary leaves. The sugar is dissolved, the leaves are removed, and the residue is kept boiling until it thickens into what is called plant honey or "Roup." But the more delicate leaves with thick layers of sugar are selected, set in layers, and in this manner is prepared the exquisite confectionery which is called Gazben. These bounties offer the peasants beneficial food particularly for the winter months.

As Samuel was nearing one of these huts, a tiny lass came running to meet him. So lovely and so attractive was this innocent peasant lass that even the immortal nymphs of the forest could not have been any more charming. She wore a red blouse, and a sash with the colors of the rainbow. Her twin long queues of plaited hair was done

in the form of a wreath on her forehead. Seeing her, Samuel stopped his horse. The little girl approached and extending her hand, said coyly,

"Let my master sweeten his mouth with this."

Samuel accepted the little girl's gift, a cake of the Gazben, and tasting it, said, "Now, did you make this?"

Instead of a reply, the little girl's face lit with a sweet smile. Samuel handed her a few pieces of silver coin, and said,

"This is for you, because you are such a charming little girl, and because you can make such delicious candy."

Taking the coins after much urging, the lass curtsied, then ran to her playmates. It was the local custom to show this hospitality to every traveler who passed by these huts.

The higher the sun rose, the more animated became the life along the road. City folk and peasants, on horses or donkeys, some walking, wended their way to their destinations. The pedestrians in particular, whenever they saw the Prince, would move deferentially to one side of the road, and bow their heads until he passed. Samuel had a kindly word for each of them, asking after their health, or wishing them well. Those who were mounted on horses or mules, would likewise dismount, and stand with bowed heads until he passed. Samuel hated that custom, and for this reason he would often beckon to them from a distance to keep right on, notwithstanding it, the travelers never failed to offer their tribute of homage to their youthful Prince.

Samuel was very popular among the common people. His gentle, mild disposition, his boundless goodness, had endeared him both to the peasant and the city folk. He was wholly devoid of the vanity and disdain peculiar to the youth of noble or princely origin to whom a thoroughbred steed, a hound, or a falcon possessed more dignity and respectability than the common peasant,

an attitude which accounted for the popular adage: "Samuel behaves as if he were not a prince; he neither beats anyone, nor swears."

When the party emerged from the valley, the road made a cut toward the mountain slope from which could be seen the vast plain of Moush. Directly below, through the thick, sacred forest, the eye could see the towering spires of Ashtishat Monastery, together with the far-flung stretch of its namesake village which gave the impression of a small city. That town was the property of the Mamikonians.

Carrying on his shoulder a huge scythe, a stranger was ambling up toward the town. He was singing a song, the words of which were wholly lost in the deep flow of its emotion and joyous expression. He was so engrossed in his song that he did not hear

the hoof sounds behind him until Samuel called to him,

"Malkas!"

Turning quickly, and recognizing the Prince, the stalwart youth grinned happily, and walking up to him, took hold of the steed's reins and looked up. There was character in his manly face and his firm, athletic frame.

"I need you, Malkas," Samuel said.

"Your servant awaits your command, My Lord," the peasant replied.

"Not now. I will see you at the fortress tonight."

Samuel kept on his way, while the peasant resumed his gay singing. Though he had left the fortress ostensibly to hunt, Samuel did no hunting that morning, but he had made a far more valuable catch. He had found a man who was indispensable to him.

## Chapter IX

### The Monastery of Ashtishat

Taron was the sanctuary of religion and piety, the native land of the Armenian gods and goddesses. Here was the majestic river Aradzani, the holy Ganges of the Armenians. Seventy years before, the white cattle, dedicated to the temple of Anahit, roamed freely and boldly on the banks of this river. Only seventy years before, here lingered the reindeers of the Armenian goddess, whose necks were adorned with golden collars. It was near the banks of this river that Lucullus, the Roman general, saw these noble animals and marveled at their beauty.

All this was in sight of Samuel now. He was traveling by way of Gargeh Mountain whose enchanting highlands were still protected by the forests of the ancient gods. Samuel's sad recollections transported him into the past, into the not-too-distant past when, in the darkness of these forests, on top of those magnificent tablelands, proudly

stood the Armenian temples of Hashti, where Armenia offered sacrifices to appease her gods. It seemed, at that moment Samuel actually saw the Temple of Vahagn, the Slayer of the Dragon, . . . the temple of the God of Bravery, brimming over with the treasures of the Armenian kings. Near it, stood the "Chamber of Vahagn," which sheltered the Mistress of the Armenian Invincible Hero . . . the golden statue of Astghik. His imagination evoked the picture of the Temple of Anahit, the Golden Mother, the Golden-born of the Armenians, under whose maternal patronage Armenia had enjoyed a period of glorious prosperity.

This cluster of three treasure-laden temples was located on the Hashti of the Armenians.

It was here, on the plains of Hashti, where the Festival of the New Year was held in the Month of Navasard. This na-

tional celebration was signalized by the appearance of the Armenian King, the Armenian High Priest, and the ministers and princes. The king himself initiated the sacrificial ceremony by offering one hundred white bulls, with gilded horns, for the appeasement of the gods. His example was followed by all the dignitaries of the kingdom.

The new year was the signal for the beginning of a new life. On this festive occasion, Armenia was bound to show to her gods the fruits of the progress made during the past year. Vahagn demanded bravery, Anahit, arts, and Astghik, love and poetry. Contests were held, of bravery, ingenuity, and skill. The poet sang the songs which he had composed, the musician played on his instrument, the wrestler regaled his powerful muscles, and the craftsman, the product of his skill. There were jousts and tournaments, there were duels between brave men, or the gladiator against the mad bull or some wild animal. There were horse races, or footmen who competed with fleet reindeer. The victor was rewarded with one of those rose wreaths which adorned the Temple of Astghik. This was the reason why this particular fair was called Vardavar, meaning, the Festival of the Roses.

The new year also marked the passing of the old year. Old sins had to be atoned, and the people entered the new life wholly cleansed. Every one had to be baptized anew. The Great High Priest took the holy water from the waves of the Aradzani and sprinkled the entire multitude. His example was followed by all the pilgrims, each of whom sprinkled his neighbor with the holy water. At this juncture, the sky was filled with millions of white doves, each pilgrim having released his dove. And these sacred birds of the Goddess of Love, so spotless and immaculate, soared, glided, and fluttered around the white-marbled temple.

The sacrifice, the water, and the dove symbolized the holy mystery of reconcilia-

tion, atonement, and love. On each new year, in the month of Navasard, the Festival of Vardavar was held on the Plain of Hash-ti, on the heights of Gargeh. On each new year, Armenia made her reconciliation, her atonement, with the sprinkling of the holy water of Aradzani. Each new year, Armenia celebrated the holy mystery of love with the dedication of doves to the Temple of Astghik.

But this was an old, old tradition which goes back to the beginning of time. When God cleansed the sinful world with the flood, after that world baptism Patriarch Noah of the Armenians was the first who, at the beginning of Navasard, released the dove, the messenger of God's love, from atop Mount Ararat. Then, after he came out of the ark, at the base of the very same mountain, he offered his first sacrifice of peace. The eldest son of the aged Patriarch, Shem, proceeded from Mount Ararat to Taron, and eventually settling at the base of Mount Shim (Sim), he solemnized the mysterious tradition. Countless centuries passed, and the tradition was observed in Armenia until the same dove made its appearance on the waters of Jordan. The tradition was later sanctified by Pagan Armenia with the celebration of Vardavar.

Samuel knew all this, and as he now reflected, the entire panorama passed before his eyes as an imperishable memory. Exactly seventy years before, a covered carriage, driven by two white mules, had gone through Taron. Six distinguished Armenian princess, mounted on horses, accompanied the carriage. These were, the princes of Hasten, the Ardzrounis, the Andsevs, the House of Angegh, the Siunis, and the Moki. Hoisted on the front of the carriage shone a silver cross which served as a sacred banner. In front of the carriage, marched Gregory the Illuminator, the founder of the Armenian Apostolic Church, his face hidden with a black, thick veil. The rear was covered by the troops of the six princes, numbering

5080 in all. This Christian army, filled with holy zeal, was passing through Taron, making in its wake holy terror on all pagans everywhere. The carriage bore all the holy relics which the Illuminator had brought with him from Caesarea.

It was scarcely dawn when the carriage crossed the Aradzani and neared the heights of Gargeh. Here, the two white mules balked and refused to go further. But the approach of the carriage made a mighty impression on the mountains and disturbed the peace of the pagan forest. Enraged were the Armenian national gods, and the infuriated pagan priests rushed out of the temples in mighty groups. In the matter of a few hours, 6946 devotees had rallied under the banner of the High Priest Ardzan, his son Demeter, and the High Priest Mesakes, all of them pagan priests and functionaries of the temples. The fight was on, between Christianity and paganism.

Hidden forces rushed out from the recesses of the forest like an army of ants, and seized all the passages and strategic heights. Armed with their weapons, the High Priest Ardzan and his son stood there hurling their raillery, and challenging to single combat the Armenian princes who were fighting against the national gods. In a short while the pagan priests had such control of the situation that the Prince of Mok was forced to hustle the Illuminator into the Mamikonian Fortress of Voghakan to prevent his capture. During the flight, the Illuminator hid the relics which he had brought from Caesarea in a secret spot of the forest.

The fight lasted days and weeks, until the Armenian princes received reinforcements. Christianity had won. The High Priest Ardzan, his son Demeter, and the High Priest Mesakes fell on the battle field, sword in hand, like heroes. So fell 1038 pagan priests. The magnificent temples on Mount Gargeh were razed to the ground, the beautiful works of Armenian art and architecture

were wiped out, and the fabulous wealth of the pagan temples fell into the hands of the new crusaders.

It was an easy matter to destroy the gold, the silver, and the marble, but the affection which had been woven in the hearts and the souls of the people . . . their faith in the ancestral gods . . . could not be eradicated, and they persisted for long centuries after the destruction of their temporal repositories. Neither sword nor fire were able to destroy them. The religion was changed, but the ancient traditions remained the same. These were the same temples where, on the eve of each new year, the Armenians held the Festival of Vardavar. During the pagan centuries, the festival was held seven times a year, and each time, both the king and the Great High Priest took part in the celebrations. The Illuminator supplanted these temples with the first Holy Altar, and the first Armenian Cathedral, which, having preserved its ancient name, was still called the Monastery of Ashtishat. The Festival of Vardavar was supplanted by the Festival of the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ. But the pristine customs of the Vardavar still remained. As of old, the Vardavar was observed seven times a year, but this time attended by the Christian king, his ministers, and the Christian High Priest who was now called the Catholicos. Again sacrifices were offered, doves were released, and the sprinkling of the holy water was continued. Again the same races, the same contests, and the same rewards, as had been practiced in the pagan era. Again the same roses which once adorned the Temple of Astghik, now to enrich the Holy Altar of Ashtishat. And the same festival was celebrated in the Month of Navasard, except that it was now called the Festival of Vardavar.

Samuel knew all this, and had taken part in these festivities. Not infrequently, he had taken part in these contests, and sometimes he had won the first prize. Not a few times

the King of the Armenians had kissed his forehead at sight of his exploits.

And now there was a new setting, with all the ingredients of a new religious war. How would the people react to the new war,

the same people who were still deeply entrenched in their ancient superstitions? The thought terrified him as he dismounted from his horse, and set foot on the threshold of the Monastery of Ashtishat.

## Chapter X

### Three Young Leaders

Late in the night when the monks had retired, three young men were seated on a spacious sofa in one of the cells of Ashtishat Monastery. An oil lamp which rested on a bronze stand poured a pale light, illuminating the three troubled faces. All three were silent, each immersed in his thoughts. From the expression on their faces, it was obvious that the silence was but a truce, to enable them to catch a breath, to rest, in order to resume the interrupted discussion.

One of the three was a tall, powerfully built youth, with a distinguished face on which the expression of nobility and elegance were so perfectly merged as to present manly beauty in its highest and most sublime form. The second, on the contrary, bordered on the short, rather than middle height, was more delicately built. But upon that fragile structure, it seemed, nature had placed a magnificent head which befitted a more powerful and shapely body. His fiery eyes betokened an energetic and excitable disposition. The first was Sahak Parthev; the second, Mesrop Mashtotz. The third was Samuel.

Sahak Parthev was the son of Nerses the Great, the mighty High Priest of Armenia. After his elementary education in Caesarea which included a knowledge of the Greek and Assyrian languages, he had gone to Constantinople where he studied philosophy and music, and became acquainted with the Greek poets. He got married here, and upon his return, as his father had done in his youth, he filled several military posts,

without any thought that some day he might succeed his father on the patriarchal throne. From the first day the Armenian Patriarchal house established family relations with the royalty and the princely houses, the Armenian Patriarch had supplemented the ecclesiastical education of his sons with a commensurate military education, and this was necessary because the High Priest of Armenia was looked upon as the most important dignitary of the entire land. He celebrated holy mass on the Lord's altar, but when the occasion demanded it, he led the army to war. He preached the word of God from the church pulpit, but in case of a contingency he could carry on negotiations with the kings in regard to the fatherland's state of affairs.

Sahak Parthev had come to the Monastery of Ashtishat on business where accidentally he met Samuel. Samuel knew that he would pass through Taron but had hardly expected to see him that day in Ashtishat. Two months before, accompanied by Mesrop, he had started on a tour of inspection of his father's estates which extended in the various provinces, from Ararat as far as Taron. The Patriarchal House possessed more estates, villages and towns, than any minister in the kingdom.

Mesrop was the son of a nobleman named Vardan, a native of the village of Hatzik, the province of Taron (Moush). His native town was half a day's journey from Ashtishat. From his childhood, this energetic, enthusiastic youth had devoted himself to the arts and sciences, had learned the

Greek, Assyrian, and Persian languages, and had mastered all the sciences of his time. As a noble-born, he was inured in the military art. He had held a number of posts at the Court of Vagharshapat, some military, some secretarial, but later, having left the court, he had become secretary at the Patriarchal See of Nerses the Great.

They were seated in a room adjoining the chamber which was associated with sad recollections in connection with Sahak's ancestral history. Sahak was dressed in all the magnificence and costly frippery of a royal prince. He was seated cross-legged, with a golden-sheathed sword resting on his knees. Next to him was seated Samuel, while Mesrop confronted the two. Samuel had already told them the tragic news from Ctesiphon pertaining to the evil intentions of his father and Meroujan, and, as a matter of fact, this was the very topic of their conversation, namely, how to forestall the impending peril. The imminent danger which threatened the fatherland had so deeply stirred the three young hearts that, in their infatuation, they had forgotten all sense of propriety and consideration of one another's person.

"The danger is more grave than ever," Mesrop interrupted the reigning silence. "We are beginning to taste the bitter fruits of our ancient errors."

"What errors?" asked Sahak.

"Those great errors which were committed by your great grandfathers, Sahak."

The last word was pronounced with such a biting tone that it struck the heart of the mighty Parthian like an arrow. His pontifical and royal blood began to boil in him, and his large eyes shone with the fire of irrepressible anger. He made an involuntary movement of the hand and at the same time the smaller youth put his hand on the silver sheath which encased a short sword.

Sahak controlled his agitation, but his tone was resentful as he asked, "You consider it an error of my ancestors, Mesrop,

that they extricated barbarian Armenia from the mire of paganism and put her in the light of Christianity?"

"I do not consider that as the error of your ancestors," replied Mesrop with a mildness which was even more offensive. "But, tell me, Sahak, what was that light formerly, and what is it now? Can it be said that the light came out of our monastery walls and entered the peasant's hut? Nor could it enter. How could it enter? From the day they brought that light into Armenia, a century has passed. But to this day, in our churches, they read the Holy Bible in the Greek and Assyrian languages, to this day prayers in our churches are offered in foreign languages. What peasant, what city-folk, what Armenian can understand those languages? And in such a setting, what light, or what spiritual guidance can the church offer the people who see ceremonies, and hear sounds which are unintelligible to them?"

"Do you think the people did not benefit at all by this, Mesrop?"

"It was we who were benefited, not the people. You, I, and this delicate youth who is silent here—pointing to Samuel—, we all are the product of Greek or Assyrian education, yes, the product of Byzantinism which murders and destroys all national feeling. But what of the poor people? They lost all the old, and found nothing in the new."

"It found much, Mesrop."

"It found nothing, Sahak. Have you forgotten when your grandfather holy Verdanes was celebrating mass in the Greek language in the temple of this very same Ashtishat, how suddenly two thousand infuriated men surrounded the monastery and threatened to pelt him with stones? The strength of the fortifications was scarcely able to save him then from the anger of the frantic mob. Have you forgotten, Sahak, when your fathers Pope and Athanagenes were seated around the feast table in the

same Monastery of Ashtishat, how some one, like an avenging angel, sword in hand, suddenly plunged in and put them to the sword? Their corpses lay there for months, unburied, and no one dared approach them from fear of the mob. In yonder chamber was committed one of the most heinous crimes—pointing to the adjoining room which was the seat of the Episcopate—thirty years have passed since that tragic event. What has been changed? Nothing. The people are the same barbarians.”

“Thirty years are not enough to eradicate from the heart of a people what has been implanted there through centuries, Mesrop.”

“I know that, Sahak, but that does not alter the fact that the education of our people has been put on a faulty, and I may be permitted to say, altogether pernicious foundation.”

At this juncture, seeing that the debate was becoming more and more heated, Samuel intervened, saying,

“What is the use of these controversies, Mesrop? Whatever has been done, is done; we must charge it to the past, and must now think of the present. What can we do to prevent the impending peril?”

The trace of a bitter smile appeared on the wan face of the small youth. He was regarding Samuel as if he were a simple-minded child.

“You are making haste, dear Samuel,” he said in a flattering voice, “Is it not true that our present sickly situation stems from our ancient sins? Without a thorough examination of these sins we cannot find the remedy to our present ills which threaten the fatherland with death. I am convinced that your father is not a fool. I am convinced that your uncle Meroujan likewise cannot be classed as a fool. But I am even more convinced that the Persian Shah who has been coddling these two traitors is not a religious man. He is sending your father and uncle to Armenia to destroy Christianity and to turn over our churches

and schools to Persian Magi. You may rest assured, gentle Samuel, that in that venture, Sapor is neither seeking his soul’s salvation nor the pleasure of his gods, but wants to settle once and forever some grave political issue which has disturbed him no end.”

Samuel shook all over; he scarcely heard the last words. They were mocking him, they were calling his father a traitor, and this from a nobleman who, in station and rank, was far below him. He was deeply offended.

“If you, Mesrop, would shorten your long tongue to the size of your stature, you would be more polite in your language.”

The small youth rose to his feet, and pacing the length of the room, came to a stop in front of the portrait of Prince Mami-konian. His voice was unperturbed when he spoke again,

“Why are you offended, handsome Samuel? Your Uncle Vasak, too, was a short man, but he was a greater man than your tall father.”

“So the son must atone for the sins of his father!”

“I like you all the more for it.”

“Stop it!” thundered Sahak with his formidable, Parthian voice. “This is no time for joke or sarcasm. Sit down, Mesrop.”

Mesrop resumed his seat.

“Sapor wants to settle once and forever some grave political issue which has disturbed him no end.”

To comprehend the meaning of these words one only had to recollect the political history of the past hundred years, beginning with the reign of Tiridates to the last days of Arshak II (Arsaces); in other words, from the introduction of Christianity in Armenia, the Armenians and the Persians had been friendly peoples because they were practically alike in their religions, and besides, the reigning dynasties of both coun-

tries were of the same Parthian, or Arsacide House. There was fraternal spirit between the Armenian and Persian kings. With the advent of Christianity, two great changes took place in the east and west which completely revolutionized the political status of Armenia. In the west was established the Byzantine Empire, with Constantinople as its capital; in the east, the Sassanide Empire, with Ctesiphon as the capital. The Arsacide dynasty of Persia came to an end, and with its elimination, Armenia lost a most valuable ally.

Thus, Armenia became a pawn between the two newly-established, inveterate enemy powers. She was not strong enough to maintain her independence, and was forced to lean toward one or the other for her preservation. These inclinations were courted by the courts of Byzantium and Ctesiphon because Armenia was the only bridge where the contending armies of the two powers could confront each other. As to the quarrels of Byzantium and Ctesiphon, these were endless. Consequently, the adherence of Armenia to one side or the other, inevitably decided the final issue of the war. Christianity alienated the Armenians from the Persians, and brought them closer to perfidious Byzantium. From that day the Persians became the enemies of Armenia. Thus, the country was between two fires, whichever side she turned to, the result was a scorching. This situation brought about the duality of roles which the Armenian kings thereafter played, with the result that they invariably suffered. Depending on the circumstances, they now leaned to Byzantium, and now to Ctesiphon. The minute they turned their face to one, the other attacked them.

Tiridates, the first Christian king of Armenia was the first to sign a friendship pact with the first Christian Roman Emperor Constantine. His successors became the victims of this policy, and Tiridates himself was the first to feel the effects of Persia's

anger. His son Khosrov II, who had appealed to the Emperor for his crown and purple, aroused the anger of Sapor who sent his brother Nerses to end the Armenian dynasty and to assume the crown. Khosrov's son Tiran, who likewise had appealed to Emperor Julian for aid against the Persian, was deceitfully lured by Sapor into Persia, and was blinded in both eyes. Profiting from the mistakes of his predecessors, Tiran's son Arshak (Arsaces) II, abandoned the friendship of Byzantium and turned to Ctesiphon. In retaliation, Emperor Valentinian murdered Arshak's brother Tiridates who at the time was a hostage in Constantinople. Arshak was obliged to become reconciled with the Emperor and married Olympia, a relative of the Emperor. This time King Sapor retaliated by destroying the city of Tigranocerta, seizing the Fortress of Ani, looting the king's treasury, laying in waste the tombs of the Arsacide kings, and taking their bones into captivity. After many battles, in which he emerged sometimes victorious sometimes vanquished by the Armenians, under the pretext of concluding a friendship pact, Sapor treacherously invited Arshak to his court of Ctesiphon and confined him in the Fortress of Anoush.

"I find the conduct of Sapor, although ignoble, but from the viewpoint of national interests, exceedingly wise," spoke up Mesrop. "This long-lived Persian king has had dealings with four Armenian kings . . . Tiridates, Khosrov, Tiran, and Arshak . . . and his nearly seventy years of experience has convinced him that the principal bond which has united the Armenians with the emperors of Byzantium is the Christian religion; the Byzantine culture comes second. Now he is trying to sever that bond by destroying the religion, the Greek language and the culture which have dominated our churches, our monasteries, and our schools. To amalgamate Armenia with the state, he is trying to spread his religion, language, and education. In this sense, he has in-

structed Meroujan to destroy all Greek books, to forbid the teaching of the Greek language, and to supplant it with the Persian language."

"We know all that, Mesrop," interrupted Sahak, "you are wasting time."

"But we must also admit," Mesrop persisted, "that none of these misfortunes would have happened to us if only we had not been such great worshippers of the foreigner; we would have been infinitely better off had we followed neither the Greek nor the Persian. By inclining toward the one we opened the closed eyes of the other. We committed our greatest error when we laid the foundations of our education on alien, spurious soil. The Persian would have been patient with us had we conducted our schools in the mother tongue. But he could not endure the Byzantine because it hurts his political interests."

After a moment's pause, Mesrop continued,

"Our teachers were the Greeks and Assyrians. The Christian faith introduced into our land a host of Greek and Assyrian clergy. These pioneers of Byzantine civilization inundated our churches and schools with their literature and language. This situation continues to this day. As yet, we do not have a translation of the Bible, no liturgy nor prayers in our mother tongue. We despised everything which was old, which was pagan. We reduced to ashes all the beautiful works of our singers and novelists. We buried the primitive, the national, and we became enamored with the works of the foreigner. And we carried our Christian fanaticism to such extreme as to reject, as if it were an abominable thing, our ancient script, our sacred pagan letters, and adopted instead the Greek and the Assyrian script. After all this, it was most natural that we could develop neither a national life nor national literature. On the other hand we invited upon us the Persian's hatred. The Persian rightly reasoned, as long as the Armenians are cordially attached to Byzantium, have espoused the Greek

language and letters, why shouldn't I also introduce my language and letters, to induce them to love me and become my allies? It is plain that Sapor's persecutions, far from being religious, are motivated by political consideration. Armenia, like a strong barrier, stands between Persia and the Byzantine Empire. He wants to destroy this barrier in order to carve a path for himself. Like a piece of bone, Armenia has always stuck in his throat, and now he is trying to chew that bone, to crush and swallow it, so he can breathe more easily."

"If he ever can digest it," interrupted Samuel.

"He will digest it if the present state of affairs is not altered," replied the irate Parthian. "But, be that as it may. Just now I want to answer a few of Mesrop's grievous remarks reflecting on the character of my ancestors." Turning to Mesrop, he continued,

"I admire your wisdom and your earnestness, Mesrop, but I cannot forgive your slanders. Your zeal seems to have gotten the better of your prudence. You blame my ancestors for having wrecked, and destroyed indiscriminately the ancient and the traditional in order to replace it with the new. That is quite true. But every reform is like that. Our Lord Jesus Christ, too, acted that way. He left no stone unturned. You blame my grandfather, the Illuminator, for having filled Armenia with Greek and Assyrian vardabets (doctors). It could not have been otherwise. He needed ready men, and brought these from Caesarea. An architect who wants to erect a building, when he lacks native craftsmen, brings them with him. But my grandfather never intended to surrender the spiritual and intellectual education of the Armenians to the foreigner. These foreigners were temporary mercenaries who should be retained until they were replaced by native talent. It was with this thought in mind that he founded numerous schools in which Christian education was

a requisite for every student, not excepting the sons of the pagan priests. But if these schools failed to produce the desired results, and the foreigners survived this long, that must be ascribed to those unfortunate circumstances to which my ancestors fell victim, robbing them of the necessary time to complete their task of enlightenment.

"Like Moses of old, my father was obliged to avoid the people's rage and spent his last days in the obscure recesses of Mount Sepouh. As to his son Verdanès, you yourself spoke of how barbarously they wanted to murder him in the temple of the monastery. His other son Aristakes was slain by Prince Archæles of Tzop (Tzopatz). Aristakes left no son, but Gregoris, one of the two sons of his brother Verthanes, was martyred on the plain of Vatni; while the other, Houssig, was killed by his father in law, King Tiran. Houssig's two sons, Pope and Athanagines, were killed in the chamber adjoining this room. Athanagenes' son Nerses, my father, is now an exile on an uninhabited island. Do you see, Mesrop, that not one of my ancestors died a natural death? All of them fell victim to the barbarism of our kings, our ministers, and the fanatical mob. All their lives they fought against barbarous superstitions, and fell on the same battlefield. Howbeit, that does not altogether grieve me. They should have ended that way so that the seeds which

they had sown, irrigated with their blood, could sprout and blossom forth into full fruition on the fatherland's soil."

Mesrop listened to Sahak's harangue in silence, but Samuel's face showed signs of obvious restlessness. The son of the Great High Priest concluded his sad apology, saying,

"If someday Providence should install me on the Patriarchal throne, my first task will be to convert the Armenian liturgy into the mother tongue and to put the education of the Armenians on a really national basis."

"And my task will be," added Mesrop, "to recreate the forgotten Armenian letters and to free our people of all Greek, Assyrian, and Persian influence."

Who could have dreamt that, exactly twenty-three years after the heated debate of this night, these two intellectual stalwarts would fulfill their vows, and pave the way for the forthcoming Golden Age of Armenian Letters! The door gently opened, and there appeared two friars who, standing before the trio, said in unison,

"We heard every thing. But we are going to demonstrate to you that the Greek and Assyrian are not as bad as you think they are."

Both were inmates of the monastery, one a Greek by nationality, the other an Assyrian. The first was Epiphanes; the other, Shalita.

*(To be continued)*



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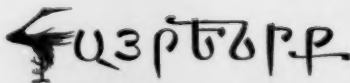
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